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Endangered species management in New Zealand
: Care or control?

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the Degree

of
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Scott Freeman

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Abstract

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by Scott Freeman

A central concern involved in attempts to manage the natural world is a philosophical debate over the nature of our understanding of it. Central to this debate is the reality of the natural world as 'described' by science and its reality as 'revealed' within the social sciences, particularly in postmodern thought, as being, at least in part, a linguistic construction. The scientific epistemology based on the 'description' of a separate reality is deconstructed by postmodern thought as an ideology that is itself implicated in environmental destruction. In addition, it is understood to involve an appropriation of consciousness and its alignment with an order of material and mathematical understanding. This ability to stand apart and know the world allows the management of nature. As such, endangered species such as the Kakapo (*Strigops.habroptilus*) are placed under management regimes in order to reduce the likely hood of their extinction. However, some postmodern thought, through an over emphasis on reality's linguistic construction, also leaves nature open to arrangement in order to meet socially projected understandings of it.

In both of these positions nature loses its autonomy, and standing as an essential counterpoint to society. This in turn highlights the concern of whether conservation should include a controlling interaction with nature or whether the preservation of wildness, that constitutes nature as contingent and autonomous, is a more important relation. The South Island Kokako (*Callaeas.cinerea.cinerea*), itself an endangered species (and possibly now even extinct), through its elusive nature and ability to evade capture, sits as a symbol for

all that is ineffable and mysterious in nature. This recognition of the ineffable is implicit in ecological understandings that highlight interconnectedness and indeed human immersion in larger processes. Such immersion in the world places limitations on a normative identification of nature. I argue that from the recognition of the ineffable comes respect, as such, the ineffable acts as the basis of an ethical relation with the natural world.

Such a recognition comes from first hand interaction that is emphasised in this phenomenological based analysis. This highlights the importance of individual experience of nature as being vital to developing an ethical relation. Such ongoing experience also feeds into culture through stories that in turn act to adapt tradition. A concern for the experiential is highlighted in ritual activities. These activities attempt to address our relation with the natural world and our place in it that does not involve its manipulation, but resolves from treating nature as essentially mysterious. This is in contrast to the experience based in restorative approaches that aim at manipulation to meet human requirements.

In consideration of the foregoing I attempt to trace the manner in which conservation fieldworkers understand their management practices and the philosophical understandings put forward by them in order to justify these practices. This includes the significance of their experiences of the natural world and the stories and ideologies of control that impinge upon their understandings. In conclusion I argue that the present praxis based preservationist tradition downplays the importance of experience, and of wildness as an essential aspect of the natural world, although these are in part recognised by my informants. Rather, it is a normative ordering that is based mostly on a scientific narrative and metaphysic that in turn risks being seperationist and colonising.

Key words

Phenomenology	Hermeneutics	Kakapo (<i>Strigops.habroptilus</i>)
Reflexivity	Environmental ethics	Conservation
South Island Kokako (<i>Callaeas.cinerea.cinerea</i>)		Restoration
Postmodern	Ritual	Language
Ecology	Wildness	Ideology
Endangered species management		Narratives
Intrinsic value	Metaphysics	Ontology

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“We long... for some sort of return to nature, and conveniently gloss over the fact that we haven’t the faintest idea what that might mean”

(Timms, 2001, p.7)

1.0 General thesis introduction

Many of New Zealand’s endangered species are placed under a management regime in order to reduce the likelihood of their extinction. This, in turn, is to meet a wider global imperative of checking the decline of biodiversity (Department of Conservation, 1998; McFadgen & Simpson, 1996). There are, however, controversies over the issue of the management of the natural world. Central to this, is a debate over the problem of the reality of the environmental crises as ‘described’ by science, and reality as ‘revealed’ within the social sciences, particularly in post-modern thought, as being, at least in part, a linguistic construction (Lease & Soule, 1995)

In this debate over the ‘reality’ of the environmental crises, the natural science position proposes that an interventionist management approach is not only justifiable but also necessary. This is supported by two main arguments. First, it is claimed that it is necessary to moderate the loss of biodiversity in order to retain the health of ecological systems (Nassuaer, 1997; Lease & Soule 1995). This is because in its present state the natural world has become fragmented and stressed, and its neglect will lead to its rapid decline (Lease & Soule, 1995). Associated with this has been an increased understanding of ecological processes (Adelson & Perlman, 1997). Second, is the assertion that all nature on the planet has been influenced by humans, so there is no ‘wild’ nature left. Consequently, overt management is not only defensible but, indeed, a human responsibility (Lease & Soule, 1995).

These arguments are related to an epistemological position that comprehends nature as a ‘given’ and that it is best described through the methods of natural science (Lease &

Soule, 1995). There are, however, several tensions here. First, the conservation of biodiversity depends upon deliberate human effort to compensate for effects that may be indirect and obscure. Consequently, the actions that need to be taken are difficult to determine. Second, ecological science has been implicated in the present environmental problems for being in allegiance with existing mechanistic scientific paradigms on which present technological and economic patterns are based. In addition, and more subtly, some commentators suggest this mechanistic paradigm has involved an appropriation of consciousness and its alignment with an order of material and mathematical understanding (Foltz, 1995).

The second position in the debate over the 'reality' of the environmental crises highlights some post-modern approaches. These deconstruct scientific descriptions and suggest that understandings of nature are dominated by cultural prejudices. Here the notion of an ecological reality that is being overwhelmed by human activities risks becoming a mere linguistic construction of human society (Kidner, 1998). From this understanding intervention is legitimised, not because nature is real, in decline, and no longer unaffected by human activities, but because nature is not 'real'. This leaves nature open to arrangement in order to meet these socially projected understandings (Lease & Soule, 1995).

I am advocating a third position that suggests nature is both real and still wild. This position straddles the more realist natural science approach and the idealism implicit in the social constructionist one. This approach attempts to address the significance of nature by seeing it as 'other', as an essential counterpoint, that acts in its autonomy as a reference or grounding for society. This in turn highlights the question of whether conservation should involve a controlling interaction with nature, or whether the preservation of 'wildness', that constitutes the 'other' as autonomous, is a more important relation. It embraces the question of what form such intervention should take, and also where the line between humans having 'influence' over nature (as humans have always had) and having control over it, is to be drawn. The core issue related to this is the extent to which humans can be considered part of nature, consequently, whether any, some, or all, human activities are producing a nature that 'ought' not to be here (Lease & Soule, 1995). This, I will suggest, cannot be resolved in a purely conceptual manner. This is because such dilemmas, I will argue, are underdetermined by scientific knowledge. Rather, it is in first hand interaction

with nature based in a respect for its autonomy that lies the means for such judgments to be made.

This is a non-interventionist approach that is based on the premise that nature can look after itself without human intervention (Turner, 1997). Our ability to manage it is always compromised due to its complexity and our culturally mediated understandings. Even though this non-interventionist position highlights the importance of first hand interaction and experience some commentators propose that it implicitly supports a separation between humanity and nature (Mills, 1995). This is because it does not promote active restorational activities. The present management approach in New Zealand, which takes place within a preservationist based conservation tradition, involves the participation in ecological restoration activities. These activities, of which endangered species management is one, are seen as having an indirect value as a way of changing the people involved, so bringing them into a mutually beneficial relationship with the natural landscape (Jordon, 1997). However, I will argue that central to such restorational activities is the requirement for a respect of nature in its autonomy. In this research I attempt to establish whether endangered species management as a type of restoration embodies this understanding, or whether it is a relation dominated by objective and utilitarian understandings of the natural world aimed at changing nature to suit social projections of it.

I carried this investigation out through the case study of the conservation approach taken to New Zealand's lost or endangered birds. It involves the juxta positioning of the South island Kokako (*Callaeas.cinerea.cinerea*), which I am using as an analogy of the wild and mythological aspects of the natural world, against the intensive management of the Kakapo (*Strigops.habroptilus*). My approach to addressing this involves developing a position that allows space for scientific description while also highlighting the importance of first hand experiential interaction with the natural world (phenomenology), along with consideration of cultural forms as mediating such scientific and experiential understandings (hermeneutics).

As has been implied, taking up this middle ground requires stepping onto the difficult and unstable territory of postmodern theory. The central themes of this can be summarised as: A questioning of objective truths of reality; a focus on the way language (including narrative) is used to construct realities; the favouring of the local over the universal; an assertion that different descriptions of reality may not be able to be directly

compared; and a willingness to accept things on the surface rather than searching for a deeper reality (Kvale, 1995). All these points have some parallels; they also, however, contain tensions. One of these is a move towards fragmentation, that at the same time involves a search for a 'broader' encompassing truth, under which this fragmentation sits (Kvale, 1995).

At the core of postmodern thought is a 'crisis of representation'. Postmodernism is the resurgence of the ancient problem of the relation between what is called "experience of 'reality' and then what we decide to call 'knowledge' about it" (Jardine cited Gordon, 1997, p.10). This is a questioning of the epistemological scheme of modernity that depicts an underlying reality, of which we make representations, through the use language. At the centre of this construction is the subject as knower, valuer and container of a core self. This scheme has been questioned during much of the 20th century through the undermining of objectivity and empiricism. This undermining involves the highlighting of our 'immersion' in the world (Crotty, 1998) and requires developing thinking that undermines a "psychological and representational " type (Jardine, 1997, p. 434).

With this emphasis on our immersion, what 'reality', and consequently, 'truth', may be is put into question. Access to them can no longer be seen as merely reflective, natural or unmediated (Jardine, 1997). Our ability to discern reality or truth is mediated by the social, linguistic practices in which we exist. This in turn risks undermining the very notions themselves. This immersion involves the problem of how to gain distance from this facticity to allow critique of social practices and cultural understandings. To do this would seem to require some sort of foundation or fixture from which to make judgments. In modernity this is the underlying 'reality' that is accessible via objectivist 'positivist' science, or the autonomous subject as knower (Schrag, 1986). Historically, much philosophy has involved the quest for such foundations (Cupitt, 1998).

This quest for foundations and consequently for a universal truth is, according to Martin Heidegger (1892-1976), the history of western metaphysics. Heidegger argues that this involves striving for Truth in 'presence' (Foltz, 1995). Attendant with this history of Truth is the history of the Good, as what is true is good, and of the Right, what is good is right (Jardine, 1997). Indeed, search for Truth is central to ethics. According to Magnus (1995), notions of truth evolve historically from *alethia* (an unveiling), to *outhetes* (the correct discourse about things), to correspondence (medieval), to certitude (Descartes, mathematical certainty), and finally to error (Nietzsche).

Heidegger argues that metaphysics underpins an age. It establishes the ways in which things are to be comprehended or encountered. Our current age, or epoch, is one of science and technology; we have a technological understanding. This is not just in the sense that electronic and mechanical mechanisms figure centrally in our day to day living, but rather, technology manifests as a “specific understanding of truth” (Foltz, 1995, p.6). Truth in the current epoch is thought of as correctness (i.e., the discovery of consistent relations between entities), rather than an unhiddenness or disclosure, of which correctness is only a facet. The metaphysics of technology establishes the ontological basis for our experiences of things. It founds what is and how things are to be revealed (Foltz, 1995). This is in turn bound up with an understanding of the role of language as being representational, through which an underlying reality is discovered, rather than being constitutive of ‘reality’.

Schrag (1986) suggests that avoiding foundationalism requires a critical stance towards the quest for certainty. This suspicion of foundational, epistemological or metaphysical frameworks is best displayed in the philosophy of Heidegger, Derrida, Rorty and Wittgenstein. For these philosophers, the aim of philosophy should be to try to gain an understanding of the interplay of thought, action, interests, concerns and so on, in which we exist, while being wary of latching onto a simplifying foundationalism (Schrag, 1986). Broadly, their work focuses on ‘ordinariness’, ‘everydayness’, and the lifeworld. Indeed, everything is seen to begin and end in everydayness and its transformation and expression in language, actions and selfhood. This involves a shift to a foundation based in reflexivity, contingency and interconnectedness, rather than a search for absolutes based in metaphysics. Such absolutes, according to Cupitt (1998), have been used for justifying hierarchies of authority and for social control.

The position I am taking is not ‘metaphysical’ in the Platonic sense, in that it founds reality on an eternal realm of ideas, or a metaphysics of God (Christianity), or the self (humanism); that is characteristic of modern thought (Cupitt, 1998). It is also not pragmatism, although it has many aspects in common with that approach. Pragmatic approaches highlight the world-building of language as an ongoing conversation within culture with no recognition of the influence of an ‘extra-linguistic’ source. So even though pragmatists, such as Rorty, do not attempt to ‘think’ about this ‘extra-linguistic’ source, or what Heidegger calls Being, they do not fail to recognise the positive or negative effects of how we understand what we cannot know, and as such see Heidegger’s philosophy, for

example, as 'edifying'. Indeed, the Heideggerian approach understands philosophy as a "poetical achievement" (Nevo, 1995, p.285), that emphasises interaction and the giving of the 'other' in the 'world's' construction. In contrast, the pragmatists understand philosophy as a "bag of tools" (Nevo, 1995, p.285) and so use what is most useful.

It is from this concern with the practical lifeworld and its interactive construction that I will attempt to develop an ethical approach to the problem of endangered species management. This approach has links with Greek thought and the notion of *ethos*. It focuses on individuals and their social and physical 'being-in-the-world'. This is a practical wisdom and questions of ethical behaviour and its justification become concerned with human character or style. Heidegger (cited in Schrag, 1986) suggests *ethos* is best translated as 'abode' or 'dwelling place', naming the 'open region' where humans dwell. This is a hermeneutic dwelling and is closely related to tradition and historicity. This ethical orientation involves both a poetic or aesthetic element as well as social, political and economic ones. In contemporary times, *ethos* has become aligned with ethical value theories, so losing the intimate connection with Being, community, nature and history, to a reification of traits in individuals (Schrag, 1986).

In relation to this approach to ethics, I pursue the notion that it is in our experience in the world that we should look for 'Truth'. However, this Truth is not an absolute and our experience is not unmediated. As has been suggested, addressing this requires considering the problem of our fundamental immersion in the world and how, and to what extent, we can become reflexively aware of it. These reflexive and immersive aspects, I propose, together make our existence, our being-in-the-world.

As such, I have broken our existence into three parts: The first involves reflexive, conscious acts (conceptual). The second part is a hermeneutic approach that encompasses the recognition of the construction of a meaningful world by language and culture into which as individuals we are 'thrown', and that involves tacit and repressed understandings, such as ideologies. It also involves the ambiguity and reflexivity within language itself. The third part, following Heidegger, is our ontological existence. It involves the recognition of an extra-linguistic world of Being which we cannot approach directly through language, so we cannot 'order' metaphysically, but nevertheless sits as an unknown and is that with which we construct our world. This is not a 'mastered' world but is always more than can be captured in language. In other words, Being is that which is 'outside' language and which it cannot describe. This involves what I will call our

ontological immersion, which I will link in part to 'wildness'. I suggest the latter two immersive parts of our existence place limits on the extent we can become completely reflexively aware of how we know the 'world'.

As the preceding discussion has already implied, this thesis will have two aspects, a deconstructive one, and a reconstructive one. These two aspects will be woven throughout the following theoretical discussion. On the deconstructive side I will suggest the modern age is based on faulty enlightenment, capitalist, and scientific narratives that need to be exposed before culture can be reconstructed. As a method, deconstruction involves a close reading of texts that expose their underlying ideology and assumptions. This technique has been used on the reality of history, truth, God, democracy, the soul, objectivity, metaphysics and so on. These ideas are seen as cultural artifacts maintained through power and dogmatism (Oelschlaeger, 1995). However, deconstruction risks being self-defeating. This is because it risks radically undermining any ability to develop a cultural knowledge through coherent meaning in language, and human culture requires an assumptive framework to guide human action. However, according to Oelschlaeger (1995), if deconstruction is seen as a form of critical thinking that is used to develop the potential inherent in all socially constructed realities, it can be useful. This is the reconstructive aspect and it relies on grounding the unstable reflexivity inherent in deconstruction. In the following theoretical discussion, and through the use of phenomenology and hermeneutics, I develop, more fully, the form such a grounding could take.

Chapter 2

Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will begin by giving a brief outline of phenomenology. This involves an initial discussion of Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938) work, and in particular its shift from a subjective focus to recognition of an intersubjective lifeworld. This latter position highlights our construction of meaning as social individuals interacting with the world. I then relate this to Martin Heidegger's early interests with human Being and the issue of our ontological immersion.

I then give an overview of hermeneutics. This overview highlights the interpretative nature of understanding and involves an emphasis on language and tradition. A central concern is the individual's role in changing tradition. This role is considered through a discussion of the relation between speech and language using the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur (1913-). Ricoeur ultimately supports a relation between language and the world that through individual experience allows changes to occur in tradition. Such experiences create a 'symbolic surplus' that in turn enables an ability to critique a tradition and also to project a future. The experiences of the natural world that the individuals involved in conservation practices have, can be important for the development of this surplus. Such experiences are also mediated by tradition so individuals always remain to some extent immersed in their tradition's symbolic framework. This I will call the tacit aspect of our immersion. In contrast to Ricoeur's approach, 'post-structuralists' emphasis on reflexivity in language risks losing the connection between language and the world. Addressing this leads to a discussion of modern and postmodern regimes of signification in the ideas of Lash (1990) and Foucault. This in turn leads to the establishment of the concept of 'reflexive symbolism'. This incorporates reflexivity, and the tacit and ontological 'structures' that make up our immersion.

2.1 Phenomenology

2.1.1 Phenomenology and Husserl

Phenomenology has its foundations in two Greek words. The first, *phainomenon*, can be broadly translated as 'to appear', 'to come to light'. Phenomena are that which show themselves- appear in the light. This part of the definition reveals two important points; first, we can only know phenomena as they show themselves, not as an inaccessible thing-in-itself behind phenomena. Second, as they 'come to light' phenomena are not always 'present' in the sense that we always know them completely. The second base of phenomenology is read in English as '*logos*' - 'to say', as a 'gathering together'. This too is a 'showing', as to say is to show. It is a second level of showing whereby speech brings phenomena to light (Macquarie, 1975). Together, these two foundations reveal phenomenology as "letting be seen that which shows itself " (Macquarie, 1975, p.25).

Thus, phenomenology recognises the reality and truth in things that appear (Sokolowski, 2000). Things do not just exist (i.e., as entities), but they also manifest themselves in what they are. For example, even mistakes in, or concealment of, appearances are real in their own way, being possibilities of being. In addition, for phenomenology there are no Platonic 'just appearances', rather appearances are real and belong to being. Things that under a Cartesian doctrine are declared to be psychological (e.g., hallucinations), are now ontological, part of the being of things (Sokolowski, 2000).

A key figure in the development phenomenology is Edmund Husserl. He felt that the objective truths of logic, mathematics etc. needed to be regrounded in the everyday acts of human consciousness. Husserl argued that it is from the world as an 'experience of living', that the world as 'an object we know', is derived. He attempted to realign the "primary point of contact" (Kearney, 1986, p.13) with the world, to this point of everyday experience, rather than the traditional one of subject and object. In order to achieve this Husserl's phenomenological approach centered on the application of a 'pure' or 'transcendental' consciousness to the objects of the world. This was in order to describe the essential structure of phenomena as they are given to consciousness before the received cultural meanings, which he calls presuppositions (Crotty, 1998). This is not just 'mere' description (i.e., our everyday understanding) but a *description at depth*. It is one that causes us to notice features we normally miss, so leading to a different view than our usual

one. This attempt to get “back to the things themselves” (Kearney, 1986, p.13) required the mind to be cleared of all presuppositions.

When Husserl is discussing freedom from theorised presuppositions he is referring to presuppositions in their role in the physical ordering of the world. However, in his phenomenological method, Husserl, is also proposing another ‘layer’ of presuppositions. These are the structures of consciousness, which order or allow our *presuppositionless* experience itself. This is his transcendental aspect. It involves “placing the subject within the matrix of absolute subjectivity” (Kohak, 1992, p. 180). Here, subjectivity is a characteristic of reality, of being itself, and is meaningfully ordered in itself. It is prior to human subjectivity and objectifies itself in human subjectivity. This is a mode of experience that he felt was given by God (immanent) and from which meaning in consciousness is first derived. For Husserl it is our most basic relation and allows the development of intentional conscious acts. Husserl called this mode of individual conscious experiencing, the transcendental ego. It is through the transcendental ego that one is able to experience the transcendental, the basis of thought, language and culture (Kearney, 1986).

There has been criticism of the transcendental ego. One of these concerns is the idealistic implications implicit in the withdrawal from the lived world into one of the pure consciousness of the individual (Farber, 1967). Towards the end of his life, Husserl accepted the transcendental ego’s ultimate connection to the lived world (lifeworld), particularly the lived world involving others and the use of language (Farber, 1967). Phenomenology's emphasis then becomes intersubjective, in that essences are not *a priori* constructs of an autonomous ego, but are derived from an historical interaction between human subjects. In other words, consciousness itself is primordially bound to the communal use of language.

2.1.2 Intentionality and constructionism

This change to an intersubjective understanding is continued in later phenomenological developments (e.g., Heidegger’s). These developments understand humans as first and foremost immersed in the world. Here, thought and action is always contextualised in a world, although this may not be able to be recognised as much of this contextualisation is taken-for-granted (Kearney, 1986). The starting point is not the ego (idealism), or the object (objectivism), but always firstly a relational interdependence. This

relation is characterised by the phenomenological term, 'intentionality'. This is not intentionality in its common usage, of having 'a purpose in mind', but rather, refers to the conscious relationship we have with objects. Indeed, for phenomenology every act of consciousness and every experience we have is intentional towards something. What intentionality highlights is that the mind is 'out' in the world, consciousness is always 'of' something. It is an understanding that highlights that the acts of the mind are 'public' acts, and of the mind as being a correlate of the world. This allows the reclamation of a public sense of thinking, reasoning and perception (Sokolowski, 2000). It overcomes the Cartesian position, where to be conscious, is to be aware of our own ideas. This is the notion that the mind is enclosed in a box. Impressions and concepts occur in this enclosed space towards which our consciousness is directed. We are not in contact with things directly, but only make inferences about them. Impressions from awareness arise in us that are then arranged as judgments and propositions that suggest what may be 'out there'. This is the classical subject/object understanding of consciousness and representation in language. Consequently, the doctrine of intentionality can be seen as going against common beliefs (Sokolowski, 2000).

As the world's meaning is constituted only in and through consciousness, so too consciousness is revealed as 'consciousness' only in its intentional acts towards something other than itself. Consequently, a human's fundamental contact with the world is one of relation. Here, relation is not seen as something existing between two separate substances, but rather as an integrated whole. It is only later at the conceptual level that they are split into separate entities (Kearney, 1986). So 'experience' is not just a subjective interpretation of objective 'reality' but an intentional relation between the two (Sokolowski, 2000). For phenomenology, intentionality is highly differentiated. There are many different types of intending that correlate with different types of object (e.g., words, perceptual objects, memories, judgments, etc.). These various forms of intending are interwoven. At its most basic level, phenomenology, attempts to sort out and differentiate these different forms of intending (Sokolowski, 2000).

This intentional relation allows the integration of thoughts and gestures (expression). In traditional epistemology expression became defined as the "fight for internal thoughts to become an external gesture" (Schrag, 1986, p. 36). The meaning of the gesture was in the mind and so was split from it, and the human body became just another object. In more recent approaches advanced, for example, by Wittgenstein and Heidegger,

the spoken word is the performance of a thought. It is the same with acts. In the meaning of an act, the act and thought are not separate (Schrag, 1986).

In addition, because gestures always occur in a social context the meaning of the gesture is not in the mind of the actor but in the practices themselves. The implication here is that 'thinking' is not a private happening, but a public one, as it occurs through and within the set of social symbols within which we inhabit (Crotty, 1998). As has been already suggested, speech and actions are not expressions of an internal mind directed 'outwards' via an external body to the public world, from which meanings are then discerned. Rather, meaning is inherent in the act of speech, or the gesture, itself. This makes meanings interpretative as they are always within a complex texture of circumstances, history and social relations (Cupitt, 1998).

It is from practices, as publicly given meanings (significant symbols), that we construct further meanings. Indeed, it is these social meanings (our culture) that allow us to function as individuals. In this sense we do not make culture, we add to it, as it always precedes us. The meanings attributed to such acts may not be immediately clear, to the individual or the other participants, as the meanings always occur within a unique situation in a broader historical social stream (Schrag, 1986). So, although individuals can be seen as constructing and making sense of their worlds this occurs within an historical and social setting.

Phenomenology comes under a constructivist epistemology. Constructionism, suggests that meaning in reality is constructed through ongoing human interactions with the world (Crotty, 1998). Without such interaction there is no meaning. This is not to suggest that there is not a world, rather this world has yet to interact with a mind. Also this is not to propose a subjectivist position, that meaning is merely imposed upon the world by minds. Interaction is the most important term here and within a constructionist account we do not 'create' meaning, we construct it. We work with, or interact with, the objects of the world (Crotty, 1998).

In sociology this comes under the banner of interpretivism. Broadly, interpretivism involves a concern for the meaning attributed to the world by social actors, (i.e., their beliefs, motives, purposes, reasons, etc.). This meaning based approach also emphasises that social actors inhabit a world of social meanings and social events that can be accessed and explained mainly through actor's meanings that lead to actions (Jary & Jary, 1991). This places an emphasis on intentional acts, rather than a domination of 'unrecognised'

structures such as language, the unconscious and so on, although it does not deny their existence. Interpretivism generally involves a commitment to an empathy and understanding of the actor's point of view, as it sees social reality as pre-interpreted. In other words, it only has form, and is constituted by, the meanings applied to it by actors (Jary & Jary, 1991).

It is this ongoing construction of meaning that emphasises an open nature to reality that involves a continuous unfolding of meaning through new experiences. This suggests that reality can be interpreted in many different ways and, taken to an extreme, that there may be no true interpretation. However, phenomenology does not deny that some interpretations may be more useful or edifying than others. Due to the relational nature of interaction not just *any* interpretation can be made - the world is not just 'made up'. Constraints are placed on how it can be usefully interpreted. So, the use of the imagination may be applied in constructing meanings, but it is not just a use of the imagination by the way of fantasy. Rather, imagination is invoked in an interplay with an object (Crotty, 1998).

Because of its emphasis on experience and relation to the object, phenomenology involves a suspicion about the cultural meanings that have been given to us. However, as suggested, phenomenology does not attempt to completely cast culture aside. This is first, because it recognises that this cannot be achieved and second, because it gives us our person hood, and so the meanings it prescribes are necessary and also liberating. However, this does not mean that culture cannot also be oppressive. Prescribed meanings also close off other meanings. Indeed, our symbol system does not just stand for things it also stands between things and us. Thus phenomenology is concerned with laying prevailing understandings aside as best we can and revisiting immediate experience. This gives possibilities for new meanings to emerge or the enhancement of former meanings (Crotty, 1998). This shows the link of phenomenology to critical thinking.

2.1.3 Heidegger and Being & Time

In Husserl's early phenomenology, existence (Being) was deemed as being identical with its manifestation in consciousness, a 'part' of the essences revealed through the transcendental ego (Kearney, 1986). In the intersubjectively based discussion on intentionality and constructionism of the previous section it is bypassed. It is only in Heidegger's phenomenology that Being becomes a central theme. Indeed, the central focus

of Martin Heidegger's philosophy always remained the 'Being of beings'. Here beings (*seiendes*) are entities, such as physical objects, numbers, thoughts (the ontic), while Being (*sein*) is existence itself (the ontological). *Sein* or Being is the permanent reality which endures and remains and finally disposes us to the meaning of being (*Seiendes*) or appearances (Kluback & Wilde, 1956).

Heidegger sees 'standing in wonder of Being', that anything exists at all, as the genesis of philosophical thinking itself (Cupitt, 1998). He feels the wonder of this 'not obvious' realm has been neglected in western culture and that western metaphysics, since Plato, has objectified Being into a self-evident permanent presence. Heidegger wants to reawaken the lost elusive sense of Being of the pre-Socratic philosophers (Cupitt, 1998), as it is from this wonder of what we cannot reach or understand, that a caring for beings and Being is invoked (Steiner, 1978). Heidegger's thought has strong theological underpinnings and ethical connotations, and it incorporates both existential and hermeneutic elements (Steiner, 1978). His book *Being and Time* (1927) was designed to reawaken the sense of the Being (*sein*) of beings and involved the development of a fundamental ontology.

Being and Time involved bringing hermeneutics and phenomenology together. He used phenomenology to draw out the fundamental structures of experience. Heidegger found temporality as such a fundamental structure, and suggested that it provided the ontological grounding of human being. So hermeneutics, to which temporality is central, acts as a revelatory aspect of a phenomenological understanding, where first the existential structures (temporality) come into view, then Being itself. As a phenomenologist Heidegger is not following a trail of culturally prescribed meanings, rather he is endeavoring to expose an ontology through firstly exposing the taken-for-granted (pre-understanding) of Being (Crotty, 1998).

Because for Heidegger it is only humans who are concerned with their own existence his hermeneutic phenomenology of Being starts with human being. He begins by questioning the notion that the elemental relation with the world is "that of a self sufficient individual directed at the world by means of its mental content" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 5). Implicit in this is that it is mental content that gives intelligibility to the world. Heidegger is suggesting that there is a more fundamental relation that is presupposed by this position. This is the world we are born into; one we exist in and do not construct mentally, and which remains as a background that is never explicit. As Heidegger points out, it underlies

our ability to make sense of making sense, but it remains elusive as “we dwell in our understanding like fish in water” (Dreyfus, 1991. p 35). Our ‘being’ then, is both something we already know, but we take for granted, so do not know. Consequently, it is not necessary to propose a mental entity called ‘meaning’ to account for our acts towards the world (intentionally) as we already ‘know’ the world. We are not first and foremost an autonomous consciousness imposing ‘values’ on the world, but a ‘being-in-the-world’ (Kearney, 1986). Heidegger calls this being, *Dasein* (‘being there’). It needs to be noted that subject and object do not coincide with *Dasein* and the world. Heidegger sees *Dasein* as both an object (an entity) and a subject, one concerned with its own being. So a portrayal of what Heidegger means by the term ‘being-in-the-world’ is unavailable, as this is to use an ontic description, and being-in-the-world is ontological (Lawson, 1986). In short, we cannot describe our own existence.

There are two vital aspects of *Dasein* that need to be highlighted. The first is that *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world is in part ‘pre-ontological’. This is because in order to be concerned about Being *Dasein* must first have an understanding of Being in its elusivity (Dreyfus, 1991). However, the pre-ontological always remains inaccessible as a ‘pre-meaningfulness’ and absence. It is what is presupposed by the ongoing ontological disclosure of Being into a ‘world’ via *Dasein*’s interaction. In addition, *Dasein* must itself be a product of Being so the meaning of Being is itself shown via *Dasein*’s concern. These are its effects, it can only be pointed to, but not said (Lawson, 1986). This brings up a central motif of Heidegger’s philosophy, which is the play of closeness and distance. For *Dasein* it is the very closeness of our own being that impinges upon our ability to be able to grasp it. As such it is what is most distant (ontologically farthest). We can point towards this understanding but not explicitly describe it, as we ‘dwell’ in it (Dreyfus, 1991). As such we cannot get a ‘whole’ understanding of our being by stepping outside of our facticity, we can only reveal parts of it. This is because there is nowhere we can cohesively stand outside the whole. Consequently attempts to reveal Being are a hermeneutic, always from within it and always unfinished.

This is a circular structure of self-interpretation (hermeneutic circle) that is the core of *Dasein* (Dreyfus, 1991), and is the second important point. Humans, through their ability to self reflect, construct a future horizon from the past, which itself is interpreted from the present, with regards to this future horizon. However, our future horizon is a set of possibilities that is mediated by our understanding of our past and present. Therefore

past, present and future are interlinked; this is our being, as we relate ourselves to our interpretation and reinterpretation of our lives. This is what Heidegger described as 'being-itself-is-time'. There is no more an horizon of the present for itself than there is for the past and future, they are always merged. It also constitutes our freedom, which is the ability to reinterpret our selves in the light of future possibilities, within the constraints of the past and present. So it is through the hermeneutic circle that we can become aware of our own complexity, relativity, inter-connectivity, the very way in which we both construct and are constructed by the world in which we exist (Kearney, 1986).

These hermeneutic interpretations, however, are implicitly interpreted via our pre-reflective mode of being. This occurs through being attentive to our moods. Moods are distinct from emotions, in that they are not aimed at anything in particular, such as an object, but can be considered as being intentional towards our being (Kearney, 1986). The most important of these moods is anxiety. The fundamental cause of anxiety is our awareness of death, of our ultimate non-being. Death is an encounter that can never be made into an object external to the individual. Anxiety is consequentially an ontological mood of our own temporality - of the ultimate nothingness we normally conceal from ourselves. Heidegger's phenomenology is about becoming aware of these moods to the level of explicit questioning, thus enforcing an experience of nothingness, which undermines our view of ourselves as being a timelessly self-enclosed subjectivity. The openness, that reveals the hermeneutic hiddenness of being, discloses that meaning is not created out of our own subjectivity but from being (our existence itself). This and the realization of our nothingness prompts us to care for being itself. This is an 'authentic' existence, one that is open to the otherness of Being, and to the faced anxiety of one's own ultimate non-being in death. It also includes taking responsibility for one's own being and its freedom. In contrast, being inauthentic is to be self-defined as a fixed actuality rather than a being with an open potential horizon. Inauthenticity involves the domination, safety and conformity of social expectations (Kearney, 1986).

This self-interpretation leaves *Dasein* without essence or a specific 'nature', except for that it is self-interpreting. So the being of *Dasein* does not involve metaphysical constructs that hold it together, such as an eternal soul. Rather, human life becomes a set of embodied and temporal projects and practices. Although self-interpretation always occurs within a specific set of social conditions it should not be equated with those practices (Dreyfus, 1991). The emphasis on individual authenticity exposes Heidegger's

existentialist undertones (Wahl, 1965). However, because “*Dasein* can never get clear about its facticity, so can never get clear of its facticity and interpret things in a radically new way” (Dreyfus, 1991, p.25), we always remain embodied, linguistic and social beings and not a being ‘for myself’ that Satre accentuated (Wahl, 1965). The point being that we cannot completely transcend our culture, rather the best *Dasein* can do is raise its consciousness.

2.1.4 The transcendental and Heidegger

The word 'transcendental' is initially described in the Collins English dictionary (1998), as “surpassing”, or “superior”. In theology it is understood as the surpassing of the natural plane of reality to the supernatural or mystical. In this sense it has a connection with metaphysics in that it is a consideration of things beyond the physical. The theological definition has close connections with the philosophical one, in that in philosophy the transcendental involves that which is beyond our experience of phenomena. Significantly, however, the transcendental is not beyond potential knowledge. In other words we somehow have access to that which is beyond experience, a pre-ontological understanding, to use Heidegger's terminology. It is in Kant's philosophy that the transcendental is central. He posited a set of transcendental categories (*a priori*) by which we can make sense of phenomena (Shand, 1993).

Although Heidegger denied Husserl's transcendental ego, *Being and Time* remained a transcendental approach. In effect, Heidegger replaces the Kantian transcendental categories with temporal ontological structures (existentials). Because Heidegger's philosophy involved a questioning of the timeless transcendental structures that tended to objectify Being, Anderson (1966) questions the validity of defining the 'static and final' transcendental structures that *Dasein* entailed. Heidegger also realised that *Dasein* was a 'structure of being' not the meaning of Being. Consequently, in his later philosophy he made a significant turn to the 'history of Being'. This involved a deconstruction of the understanding of Being in Western metaphysics, which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3. This shift meant he crossed out Being as a transcendental ideal meaning on which we can make sense of our lives (*Dasein*). What is also overcome is the ontic-ontological difference, as beings and Being become an appropriation of language. It should be noted, however, that the notion of the pre-ontological is not lost (Kearney, 1986).

This is shift from a concern with the meaning of Being in our lives and its associated transcendental existentials, to one with truth as disclosure (*alethia*) in poetical reminiscence, involved a different understanding of the transcendental. This latter understanding further highlights our immersion. The earlier notion of transcending phenomena was concerned with accessing what lies behind or beyond them. This involved 'standing above' them, that is an *ascent* to view them, so as to realise how they are, or came to be (Sokolowski, 2000). Such an ascent may produce an "absence of ground" (Seebhom, 1994, p. 247), whereby the world of phenomena drop away, hence the mystical connections. These two notions of transcending (ascent and absence of ground) are, however, operating in opposing senses. The latter 'absence of ground' has a relation with Karl Jasper's (1883-1969) notion of the transcendental as the "all enveloping, the other than us which encompasses us" (Wahl, 1965, p.10). It is not a ground we look down upon, so to see more clearly, but an unground which envelopes us. We do not transcend 'up' with God; rather, things drop away into unknowable depths. To transcend is not to know more but less; it is unsettling rather than empowering. Seebhom (1994) suggests that Heidegger's later work proposes that Being, which is the ground of beings, is itself groundless. "Asking for the ground of being is not asking for the ultimate ground [such as the existentials of *Dasein*] but a leap into the un-ground" (Seebhom, 1994, p.238).

The transcendental can now be understood as a pure becoming which we can only sense. To paraphrase Jaspers; it is the background of our existence of which we may only glimpse scattered regions. The absolute is something hidden, revealing itself like the flash of a rising fish in the abyssal depths of the ocean. Thought is engulfed and overwhelmed and destined to be shipwrecked. Yet in this overwhelming, the background from which all emerges is sensed (Wahl, 1965). This brief discussion of the transcendental is important as I will later relate it to wildness, as wildness, I suggest, is related to an absence of ground, and so to Being. Language is involved here too, as Being is that which lies beyond language.

2.2 Hermeneutics

2.2.1 Introduction

Heidegger's hybridising of phenomenology and hermeneutics in *Being and Time* notwithstanding, in general, hermeneutics emphasises the ongoing interpretation between culture and individuals in contrast to phenomenology's concern with individuals and 'objects'. Like phenomenology it also has a constructionist epistemology. It was initially a theory of interpretative understanding that was concerned with the interpretation of historical texts, whereby meaning is seen to come out of the reader's interaction with the text. As has been discussed, in the 20th century it has been developed by Martin Heidegger to address ontological questions. It was also developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-), into a basis for understanding all facets of human life (Warnke, 1987).

Hermeneutics involves a central tension, as it is not just about identifying textual meaning and intent, it is rather, concerned with how textual meaning *should* be understood. Accordingly, it has a critical aspect where the determination of meaning involves judgment and common sense. This in part involves the possibility that an understanding can be gained that goes further than the author's own understanding. This is because hermeneutics treats texts not just as 'blocks of language', but as encompassing the intentions of the author, their historical and biographical context, and the relationship between the readers and author (Crotty, 1998). Consequently, hermeneutics is a method for deciphering indirect meaning, involving a deconstruction of the text to uncover hidden meanings below the obvious ones. As such it involves rendering the strange and unfamiliar understandable. It treats all texts as having such an aspect, one involving 'distantiation', as it is from a distance that any text is both articulated and appropriated. In saying this, however it also assumes a commonality between the text and the reader, which is the basis for developing an understanding. As will be discussed, different authors have put varying emphasis on these aspects of distantiation and tradition (Crotty, 1998).

2.2.2 Understanding and explanation

The differing emphasis is most plain in the difference between romantic hermeneutics and modern hermeneutics. The former involved Wilhem Dilthey's (1833-1911) approach of attempting to explain the meaning of the text through deciphering the

intentions of the author. In this 'objective' approach, that emphasised distantation, an assumption is made that the reader is able to enter to socio-historical situation of the author without being affected by their own socio-historical situation, and develop a full and final account of it. However, Gadamer suggested that this overlooks important differences between understanding meaning and explaining the occurrences of events. Understanding involves the tradition and historical context in which 'objectivity', as the ability to explain an event, is itself defined (Warnke, 1987).

Indeed, Gadamer sees all interpretations rooted in tradition and history, including our entire social and self-understanding, colouring also what is to be studied and how it is to be approached. Our ability to recognise and take account of this prejudice, is the closest we come to objectivity. It is in this reflective recognition of prejudice that distantation from tradition (our culture) occurs. However, Gadamer is not proposing a purely subjective standpoint, as understanding is primarily coming to an agreement with others as an inter-subjective reality. It is in recognising our own prejudice we can recognise other's viewpoints and enrich our own (Warnke, 1987). As such, it is the prejudice of the tradition as a whole that is most important for Gadamer, not subjective prejudices (i.e., self-reflective judgments). Gadamer places limits on such a subjective recognition and suggests that history does not belong to us as individuals, we belong to history, so the meaningfulness of reality is transmitted by tradition as a whole. As individuals we have a role to try and constantly assimilate and interpret it so as to be true to the tradition (Crotty, 1998). Gadamer's position then, is conservative, always giving precedence to tradition.

One way to picture the relationship between understanding and explanation is to link understanding with wholes (holism) and explanation with parts. Here, interpretation becomes circular (hermeneutic circle). As the explanation of the parts changes so does the understanding of the whole, and as the understanding of the whole changes so too does the explanation of the parts. Explanation involves the extension of tradition through individual expressive acts, speech for example, that are new interpretations within the broader understandings of the tradition, which make such explanations possible. This involves the recognition that the natural sciences, as explanatory, are themselves sciences of meaning. Understanding and explanation are an ongoing interpretative spiral without any ultimate conclusion (Kearney, 1986). Participation in a tradition for an individual, involves both an immersion in its understandings and so its continuation, and also in developing new explanations so inducing adaptation in the tradition.

For example, a hermeneutic *understanding* of South island Kokako comes from past social understandings and acts towards it and similar birds (e.g., Huia). Its lostness can be linked with finding other lost species (e.g., Takahe), its mysteriousness, its beautiful call, and wildness. For the individuals involved such understanding includes past experiences and endeavours that are associated with this social history. In addition, there are *explanations* associated with these understandings that involve 'causes' for the South island Kokako's lostness. For example, its elusive behaviour and its population decrease through predation and habitat loss. Such explanations are not distinct from the social understandings associated with the South island Kokako. My investigation cannot suppose to reveal the intentions of the people involved, only a 'fusion-of-horizons' with my own socially derived understandings, of which this theoretical development is part.

2.2.3 Linguistic structuralism

Like Gadamer, Ricoeur's hermeneutics focuses on language and the transmission of tradition. However, he puts more emphasis on individual speech acts than Gadamer, leaving more space for individuals to affect tradition. Ricoeur is also interested in 'structuralist' ideas, where the tacit aspect of structures such as language and the unconscious mediate individual acts. However, his position upends the classical linguistic structuralism of Saussure (Kearney, 1986).

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) founded linguistic structuralism, as a method of analysis. Saussure was concerned with how meaning originates within the formal operations of language. Consequently, he did not focus on the problem of reference, in other words of how words refer to empirical or ontological world outside language. This was because he was interested less in what meaning is than how it is produced by the structure of sign systems (Kearney, 1986). He proposed that reference is dependent upon meaning, which was produced by the interplay of an interrelated network of signs within language, rather than as meaning being dependent upon reference to the empirical world. Consequently 'truth' and 'reality' are merely constructs within language (Kearney, 1986).

Saussure developed a distinction between language and speech. Language (*langue*) refers to the entire realm of all possible usages of a language, while speech refers to one particular instance of its use. Therefore, *langue* sits as an encompassing and timeless system, of which speech acts are a temporary expression. For Saussure then, *langue* is primary, it is the whole and speech acts are parts that are ultimately subservient to

language. *Langue* is a self-regulating set of signs without external reference. As such it is complete in itself and cannot be explained empirically or metaphysically (e.g., to timeless essences). Saying and understanding a sentence has no meaning in itself but only within the overall system of *langue* (Kearney, 1986).

Saussure also proposed an arbitrary relation between the sound made (signifier) and the mental idea (signified). Consequently, the relation between the sign and what is signified is not determined by any natural law, rather it is a matter of social and cultural convention. So meaning is not generated by a prior reality that exists independently of language such as subjective human consciousness, but is generated within language itself. The internal development of meaning between signs precedes the representation of meaning by signs (Kearney, 1986).

2.2.4 Ricoeur's hermeneutics

Like Saussure, Paul Ricoeur breaks 'language' into two parts. The first is language, as a syntactical structure. This is made up of signs that make up a structure that is internal to itself, a chain of words that continually refer back to themselves. Consequently, it has no link with natural reality, but operates as a common sense-making structure. Speech, in contrast, is always about something external to language (i.e., it refers to the empirical world). The basic unit of speech is the sentence, while it is the sign for language. The building up of sentences allows unique utterances. It is from here that Ricoeur (Schrug, 1986) proposes that critique and creativity are the 'overflow' of meaning in speech, which allows change and adaptation in traditions. This overflow involves a slipperiness in meanings, as discourse always involves interpretations. The ongoing play, or 'fullness' of speech creates pluralism (Schrug, 1986). It is because of this polysemic surplus that the semantics of discourse cannot be fully formalised in an idealised structure of language proposed by Saussure.

Ricoeur develops this position further, suggesting that humans are always 'beings interpreted' and thus they involve an existence that cannot start from itself, but rather from the 'fullness of language' where meaning already resides as an historical horizon, and from which thought emerges (Kearney, 1986). For Ricoeur, the symbol invites thought, involving an imaginative use of its polysemic surplus. As such, we are always in a tradition of prior signification. The sign, as structure of language, carries *ideals* that act as reference points, such as utopias and ideologies, on which speech builds. There are, however, no

identical meanings whereby the past is represented by the sign in pure cognition as an idea or essence. Speech involves a recollection and projection of ideals. So ideals become sedimented meanings that are built up over time as speech and language interact through interpretation. In this interaction, speech and action have an ability to do what has not been done or said. Here signs have a hermeneutic function as a mediator of historical experience carrying the past into the present and allowing the projection of a future. The speech act then, as given by an individual, is never an instantaneous present but is fundamentally an expression of recollection, sedimentation and meaning formation (Schrag, 1986).

This means that the individual speech act is never just a private meaning produced by an autonomous speaker but is the display of a social semantic system. Consequently, individual expression surpasses the intentions of the particular action, and in doing so exposes patterns of ideals and values that are not reflectively recognised, and are entrenched in the patterns of everyday life (Schrag, 1986). This is what Ricoeur calls the 'social imaginary' and is the symbolic "interplay of ideals, images, ideologies and utopias informing our cultural and political unconscious" (Kearney, 1995. p, 66). The social imaginary needs to be thought of as both a mediator and carrier of tradition. This highlights a central feature of Ricoeur's hermeneutics, which he sees as the art of deciphering indirect meaning. He called this the 'semantic challenge'. This deciphering is required because of the existence of multiple factors in the social imaginary that mediate meaning. The subverting effects of its symbolic interplay forces a continuing reinterpretation of the tradition, as a polysemic surplus or pluralism, so allowing space for critique. Ricoeur calls this subverting mediation, distantiation, and the pluralism produced the *poetic*. The latter is in contrast to Heidegger's position where the poetic has ontological connections, as the saying of Being, indeed, a presencing of the event of Being itself (Kearney, 1995). The emphasis for Ricoeur then, is on the interpretation of tacit understandings, rather than the ontological concerns of Heidegger.

This pluralism in signified identities can be shown in the sign (name), Kakapo: Kakapo as an endangered species; Kakapo as strange large green nocturnal parrot; Kakapo as a past food source; Kakapo as a treasure; Kakapo as a commodity, Kakapo as a wild animal; Kakapo as *Strigops.habroptilus* and so on. The significance of the Kakapo results from its interpretation and reinterpretation through time (Schrag, 1986).

Ricoeur's (cited in Lawlor, 1992) emphasis on the mediational role of language means that it becomes necessary for thought to externalise itself via signs (language). This

mediation of thought makes Truth impossible. So it is not possible for thought to achieve pure self-knowledge (self-understanding) through intuitive self-reflection (Lawlor, 1992). This is because linguistic mediation postpones the end of a completed mediation where original thought may be recovered. According to Ricoeur this can be partially addressed, and he attempts to show mediation as having a beginning and end, where the present, identity and continuity precede mediation, absence, discontinuity, etc. This is in contrast to Derrida who emphasises discontinuity (see Section 2.3.1). Indeed, for Ricoeur mediation has a stabilising effect, as our experiences in the world always evolve into repeatable structures such as discourse that enable a consistent relation. As discourse originates in the world, expressions of experiences refer back to our being-in-the-world. Novel terms (e.g., symbols, metaphors) still refer back to the world as they are *imaginative* expressions of new experiences. Ricoeur sees self-understanding and reflection as a task, a spiraling circle involving a deferment, but one, Ricoeur believes, that should close (Lawlor, 1992). This puts diversity and surplus within a possible unity, that in turn lies within the horizon of our time and place. Consequently, we are able to develop a non-arbitrary, though contextual, understanding (Lawlor, 1992).

2.2.5 Ideology and myth

The interpretation of signs and speech acts, due to the multiplicity of meanings allows new interpretations to emerge. It also brings about a suspicion of recollected meaning. Such suspicion is encapsulated in the idea of ideology. Ricoeur sees ideology as in part processing a false consciousness that distorts reality. This involves the confusion of symbolic constructions with 'reality', and is central to the work of Nietzsche, Marx and Freud. However, he also sees ideology as necessary. This is because ideology in part carries the 'social imaginary' and it is this imaginary that allows the projection of utopian potentials (Kearney, 1995). In this respect, Kearney (1995) argues that religion has an emancipatory role, not just one of domination and social control. Ricoeur argues that ideologies are unsurpassable phenomena of our socio-historical existence. They are part of our facticity and sense making. They are carried in symbols, these symbols, however, are not only carriers of ideology, but as already discussed, 'give rise to thought', and the social imaginary of a possible future horizon of value (utopias). It is in this projection the limits of ideology are transgressed (Kearney, 1995).

Ricoeur assigns three roles of ideology in the social imaginary. The first is integration, which is a social group's need for a common set of images where it can represent itself to itself and others. This is a symbolic network of ideals, or "a tradition of mythic idealisations" (Kearney, 1995, p.76), that are allied with a set of stable and repeatable order of meanings. The second role highlights the stability of meanings associated with integration, and is ideology's role in suppressing dissimulation or novelty. This is because, Ricoeur (Kearney, 1995) suggests, ideology operates at a pre-rational level, so that we think from ideology rather than about it. As such, it tends to be uncritical of itself, and therefore conservative. Consequently, pluralism and radical novelty is seen as a threat to self-recognition, and stifle what 'is' from what 'ought to be'. In this sense it suppresses ethics. The third role of ideology that develops from this conservatism is domination; in ideology the question of authority becomes self-legitimizing, what 'is' is how it ought to be (Kearney, 1995).

However, Ricoeur argues that an ideology never has total domination. This is revealed in that some coercion or persuasion is always required in its social application (Kearney, 1995). Such as in the rewards (financial wealth) and punishments (unemployment) in contemporary capitalist based economic systems. This system is supported by 'laws', such as private property rights, which are upheld by the state through the justice system (police, courts). Ideology also has a charismatic quality, which in this example, is the aspect of mass consumerism. This entails an aspect of instant gratification that compensates for a disenchantment of the world through its secularisation.

Indeed, with the demise of religious ideology another arises. Today science frequently fills the role of 'ideological legitimisation'. Because science sets itself up as the opposite to ideology, as unveiling ideology, it risks becoming self-justifying and ignorant of itself as a carrier of values (Kearney, 1995). Indeed, Heidegger argues that such a 'reification of ideology' has occurred in the contemporary world. It is what he describes as the closure of metaphysics (Sallis, 1986) and will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

This centrality of science occurs in conservation. For example, high profile British conservationist David Bellamy recently suggested (Radio New Zealand, 11/05/2001, 8.30 am), that in conservation matters the answers lie in science, and although it may be implicated in the current ecological destruction, it is only because it has been misappropriated. What is implied is an appropriation or distortion of 'post-ideological' scientific truths by ideologies.

Ricoeur argues (Kearney, 1995) that scientific reason should not be treated as a claim to some post-ideological vantage point. It is an ideology too and not just an uncovering of falsity. If ideologies are interpreted as facts, as science often is, they risk abandoning their exploratory role as disclosers of possible worlds. In this abandonment of the projection of alternative futures, the ability to self-critique is also lost. Thus, revealing ideology as a social imaginary involves a critique of the critique of ideology (Kearney, 1995).

The projections arising out of the social imaginary themselves need an ethical critique. The distanciation required for this lies in the very imaginary that allows a transgression of ideology, so within the ideology itself. This is a creative interplay of ideology and utopia, where ideology is a symbolic confirmation of the past and utopia, a symbolic opening towards the future. The interplay of immersion (understanding) and critique (explanation) is central here. It is because of this immersion that we are unable to reach some pre-ideological vantage point, so creating the need for a distanciation that operates from within this immersion. This for Ricoeur lies in the surplus generated between the present 'real' and past/present 'ideals' as recollection and projection within the social imaginary. The social imaginary (as a tradition) itself, needs to be open enough to allow for such recollection and projection. This also means the critique of ideology is always begun but never completed (Kearney, 1995).

In contrast to the broader operation of ideology, myth is a foundational narrative, or narratives, through which a community understands itself (Kearney, 1995). This means that myth has a fundamentally integrating role (Kidner, 1998). MacIntyre (cited in Gare, 1998) suggests that mythologies are the narrative archetypes through which a culture instructs its members in their own identity.

What is important about myth is that it allows, through story telling (narratives), the reinterpretation of the past, in doing so releasing new possibilities for understanding it. This then allows new projections of possible futures. In this pluralism it allows critique of present understandings of the past. It is this very pluralism that also allows the demasking of myths. The critical act of demythologising should not be confused with demythising - which leads to a positivistic impoverishment of our culture (Kearney, 1995). Demythising is associated with a rupture from a symbolic understanding to a representational one in modern thought (Lash, 1990) (see Section 2.4.1). This allows a certain critical distance that recognises that myth no longer 'explains' reality, but risks oppressing the emancipatory

function of myth in exploring how things might be. This is because myth reveals that the past contains more than just a narrow history of facts. Kearney (1995) argues that the crisis of modernity is in part associated with the separation of myth from history that oppresses the utopian exploratory function it provides.

2.2.6 Habermas and communicative ideals

For Habermas (cited in Outhwaite, 1986), hermeneutic consciousness remains incomplete if it does not include a reflection on the limits of hermeneutic inquiry. Habermas argues that this limit is its 'linguistic idealism' which means it cannot deal with systematically distorted communication. Habermas agrees that it is valid to understand language as some sort of meta-institution, as social action is only enacted through communication in ordinary language. However, he proposes that language, as a carrier of tradition, can also be a conveyor of domination and social power (Outhwaite, 1986).

In order to address this, Critical theorists, such as Habermas, argue for an ability to reveal ideology through a motion of critique based on standing outside tradition, through the use of cognitive rational communicative ideals (ideal speech). Habermas proposes that an open uncoerced discussion can enable the removal of the ideological distortions of tradition. This amounts to an absolution of the communicative structure, as it is seen as a deeper structure than tradition itself (Apel, 1994). Habermas uses a transcendental argument, namely proposing that critique, as communicative argumentation, itself is transcendental, and as such stands above tradition, ideology and metaphysics (Apel, 1994). Apel (1994) defines four transcendental (universal) principles of argumentative discourse. They are: their clarity, their claim to truth, their sincerity, and their provable rightness. Apel (1994) suggests all philosophical discussion and assertion is embedded in these principles.

Ricoeur (1981, cited Schrag, 1986, p.49) suggests, that the dilemma if such ideals are conceived of objectively (i.e., as standing timelessly separate from tradition), is that of an alienating distantiation that allows the social world to be objectified, but shatters "the fundamental and primordial relation whereby we belong to and participate in the historical reality we claim to construct as an object". What Ricoeur is proposing is that there is no undistorted place to stand that allows us to finally judge the extent of a tradition's ideological distortions (Warnke, 1987). This suggests that critique does not stand disconnected from the ideological and traditional (DeMan, 1984).

Tradition always stands as an initial claim to truth, one that is not just subjective or arbitrary. This is because we are carried by the meanings of the past before we are able to critique it (Kearney, 1995). We are not originators of the truth but belong to a context of presumed truth (Kearney, 1995). Ricoeur argues that every act of communication assumes a certain operative truth. In this sense Habermas's ideal speech becomes a 'regulative idea' where we accept the truth claims of the past until a better argument prevails. Here, communicative ideals can be seen as being part of the beneficial aspect of our tradition because they emphasise pluralism in tradition. Kearney (1995) suggests that critique is a project of freedom that flows from mythical narratives of liberty.

In summary, Habermas's emancipatory ideal should be considered a utopian creative renewal of cultural heritage and not as a transcendental position. This means critique itself should be considered as a tradition. Indeed, the enlightenment claim to an ahistorical judgment residing above all prejudice is itself a prejudice (Kearney, 1995).

2.3 Language and reflexivity

Language has emerged as a central aspect of the approach I am taking. This involves the recognition of the central role played by language, theory, sign and text in our understanding of reality. Indeed, it is understood as constitutive of the meaningful world that humans inhabit in both phenomenology and hermeneutics (Crotty, 1998). This is in contrast to language being considered as a purely representative medium of an independent reality as it is in some modern thought, including the dominant view of natural science (Oelschlaeger, 1995). In this development, reflexivity becomes a concern because recognition of the importance of language must occur within language itself. This has parallels with the paradox involved in suggesting that the world's character is partly due to the concepts employed, is to use those concepts. Thus claims such as, 'there are no facts', or 'all knowledge is relative', become reflexively paradoxical (Lawson, 1986).

In philosophy, awareness of this problem of reflexivity has existed for many centuries. For example, Hegel used it against Kant's transcendental arguments for an *a priori* realm of categories, not available to thought but which allow us to experience. Hegel suggested that if they were not available to thought then Kant would not be able to elucidate their existence. Ways around this problem were developed, largely through the

proposal of meta-positions, which involves excluding the statements describing the theory, from the theory, or including the existence of the theory as part of its outcome. For example, Marx, included his theory's own development as part of its own description of historical development (Scott, 1995). In general, Lawson (1986) suggests these approaches tend to be *ad hoc* and inconsistent.

Another approach to avoiding this difficulty is in the work of the Pragmatists. This position does not require a commitment to an underlying truth, rather it involves the play of 'language games', which do not need to be commensurable (Lyotard cited in Boyne & Rattansi, 1990). They propose that their propositions are not claims to truth, as they suggest that no general metaphysical claims can be made that describe the nature of the world. Instead, their propositions are in a context of an attempt to do something. Their theories are attempts to get others to change their actions. Even so these theories themselves could be construed as an attempt to describe the nature of the world, to which the pragmatists would say that they are instead 'tools' for the matter at hand (Lawson, 1986).

2.3.1 Derrida

Jacques Derrida takes this reflexivity, with regards to language, to an extreme in his development of post-structuralist thought. He sees the modernist drive for truth as a quest for essences. He suggests the notion of a universal structure in language is one such essence (an original presence). Derrida attempts to show that there has never been an 'original presence'. The very idea itself is fundamentally a play of language, where language is a system that continually refers to itself; an endless shifting from sign to sign that can never be fixed in some transcendental start or end point. Presence itself is only an effect produced by signifiers that continually point to other signifiers. There is no deeper reference outside language, as the 'thing itself' is always shielded by its representation in language. He calls this 'differance'; an ultimate deferring where the endless chain of signs perpetually postpones any end to the chain in some original signified (e.g., a thing) (Kearney, 1986).

The important distinction between Ricoeur's (see Section 2.2.4) and Derrida's accounts of the relation between language and the world, is that Derrida emphasises the ineffable middle ground which is prior to thought or perception (mediation). Consequently, he is putting non-presence, discontinuity and difference, as being prior to presence,

continuity and identity. By placing mediation centrally, it does not act purely as a channel for thought, but rather, is seen to override it. Furthermore, Derrida believes that what dominates mediation itself is 'chance'. Differance accounts for the unseeable accident, and not novel productions of imagination. Difference is not the re-use of signs in repetition, and recollection emphasised by Ricoeur, but a mis-use that is internal to the sign's structure and not external to it. Every expression of chance sends interpretation back and forth to rethink the origin and transform the end. This is a zigzag motion that does not allow a beginning or an end (Lawlor, 1992). So Derrida's deconstruction avoids any purpose, any horizon, but rather, relies on chance - the accident beyond a regulated polysemy. For Derrida, Being manifests itself as chance, undermining a relation of beginning to end, and any possibility of a consistent relation with the world.

2.3.2 Metaphor

Derrida linked a striving for truth in Western metaphysics with the use of metaphors. For example, 'structure', or 'presence' tend to be deployed as aids to thought. These in turn tend to envelope thought and constrict thinking outside it (Cooke, 1996). This is because metaphor carries discourse, it both constrains and opens through emphasising links between certain parts of the world and not others. Metaphors involve a presencing, by bringing some aspects forward and therefore also always involving the absencing of others. Metaphors build networks of understanding and knowledge that link what is not yet known or experienced, to what is known and experienced. For example, metaphor is used throughout philosophy; Kuhn - 'revolution', Wittgenstein - 'game', Derrida - 'play', Gadamer - 'textuality', Husserl - 'horizon' and 'field' (Schrage, 1986). This links these philosophers' new uses of language into a known and common one. 'Play' and 'game' are metaphoric signs that act as 'ideals' that bring together both social and individual histories (e.g., sport and childhood). While 'horizon', 'field' and 'rooted' are more perceptually based metaphors and link us with the non-human world. What is important here is not the use of metaphor, that is unavoidable, rather an awareness of their role in thinking (Schrage, 1986).

2.4 Modern and postmodern

I will be using this part of the discussion in support of the possibility of a 'reflexive symbolism'. Such a notion aligns well with the hermeneutic and phenomenological positions. It gives a 'grounding' for reflexive instability incumbent in post-structuralist thought, while also avoiding a foundationalist position. This will be done through highlighting the shifts from a pre-modern symbolic understanding, to a modern representational one, and finally to a post-modern symbolic understanding.

Both modernism and postmodernism are reflexively based: In the former reflexivity is expressed as a separation that evolves an autonomous selfhood and a representational understanding of language. In the latter, reflexivity develops into groundless immersive play where language is seen as the free creation of individuals or communities. This involves an "ontological abstinence" (Cheney, 1995. p. 24), on the nature of the connection between language and the world. Truth is derived purely from social negotiation within language. This type of 'post-modern' thought falls into a form of cultural idealism. It involves the loss of 'nature', as the 'real' becomes lost in representations, in the play of signs (see Section 2.3.1).

2.4.1 The modern *episteme*

A *culture* produces cultural objects. These include customs, artifacts, ideas and so on. These cultural objects involve, first, a 'mode of signification'. This concerns the relationship between signifier (sound, images, words), the signified (concepts and meanings), and the referent (the real object). Second, they involve the specific cultural economy, which involves the circumstances of the production of cultural objects including the institutional, productive and circulatory frameworks involved. These frameworks are the *social*. In total they constitute what Lash (1990) calls "a regime of signification" (p.5). Lash (1990) breaks knowledge into periods; each period characterised by a regime of signification. In parallel, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) calls these distinctive underlying structural characteristics of signification, *episteme*. This has correspondences with Heidegger's metaphysical epochs in his descriptions of the 'history of being' (see Section 3.3.1). In Foucault's *episteme*, 'original' expressions of the human subject, are merely surface effects of an underlying autonomous system. Consequently, *episteme* pre-exist the human subject. As such Foucault's argument has a structuralist emphasis (Kearney, 1986).

Lash (1990) traces an initial shift in regimes of signification to the break of the religious from the secular. It is from the secular that the notion of the social derives, and which is further developed into an objectified structural account of human interaction. In the primitive worldview, religion dominates; it explains and justifies the social order. This is reflected in language which is dominated by the 'symbolic'. Here the symbolic is the social, as symbols do not represent other types of things. Rather referents and signified are considered one and the same. Lash (1990) equates symbolism with foundationalism, which can be described as the explanation/legitimation of reality in universalised metaphysical terms (i.e., God, reason, nature, natural laws, etc.).

According to Foucault, the Renaissance was the end of this epoch of 'resemblance' (symbolic) where thoughts and words were understood to resemble things as ordained by God. During the 17th and 18th centuries a 'gap' appeared between words and things which he called the epoch of representation (signs). Here words function as representational ideas whose purpose is to classify, order and compare the things of the world. The world is no longer read directly but becomes an autonomous material immanence which humans try to master using conceptual acts of representation. This is what Lash (1990) designates as realism. There is a 'real' world 'out there' that we can make representations of, rather than in the symbolic realm, where the world is as it is symbolised. Thus culture is able to represent, and consequently attempt to understand, its own social order; the cultural and social are split.

As such, the world acquires meaning only as it is represented by the subject as a valuer within the overriding *episteme* of representation. This implies that the subject too is represented to him/herself as an object (Kearney, 1986). This, in short, involves the 'separation of humans from the world', its genesis is in reflexive thought, which is an act of self-awareness that is carried forward to a split in consciousness itself (Lash, 1990). Here consciousness is both immersed in the world and also stands apart from it (Lawson, 1985). This involves the creation of subject and object. This is a period of 'differentiation'.

These realist ideas (representations) have a transcendental aspect, since they are an ordering from 'without', while the symbolic, is immanent (from within). This development also allows a moral order to develop - where the split between 'ought' (representations) and 'is' (reality) become manifest. Lash (1990) goes on to propose that a set of modern spheres develop within this secular world. These are described as the moral/practical, the aesthetic, and the theoretical. These spheres, he suggests, become

somewhat autonomous from each other. Kearney (1995) suggests that this split involves a crisis of value. First, because it involves a secular- religious split, so creating an initial dilemma of authority (the death of God). Second, the split of aesthetics (poetic/art) from the moral and practical (ethics) means that ethics becomes dominated by a purely practically based morality of rules and is disconnected from a broader expression of existence. This disconnection of the poetic from the practical will be discussed and developed more fully in Chapter 3.

The development of autonomy in these modernist spheres can be described as each sphere becoming self-referential, in other words, cut off from other spheres and self-enclosed. However, Lash (1990), proposes that self- legislation is a better description than self-referential. Here, each sphere retains some overlap with the others but still develops its own forms of valuation and conventions. This suggests that the question of theory validity, for example, is based on internally defined criteria of validity and evidence (e.g., in the natural sciences (see Section 3.3.2)), rather than on its ability to reflect reality. However, some theorists, such as Rorty (1980), propose that self-legislated 'facts' become mistaken for reality. This mistaking of 'representations' for reality is what DeMan calls ideology (Docherty, 1993). It can be seen that the representations involved in the self-legislated modern spheres can become easily confused with purely symbolic understandings. Consequently, modern thought is never completely realist. Indeed, as has been discussed, Ricoeur argues that ideologies are part of the way a culture represents and justifies itself to itself, so are never really representational (Kearney, 1995). The corollary of this being that the cultural and social are never able to be completely differentiated (Lash, 1990).

This difficulty is revealed both in postmodern 'theorising' and in 'modernist' sociology. In the former, some form of 'representation' needs to be made in order for a theorist to say anything about his/her social world. In the latter, to understand society, as a member and observer, is to learn to think its concepts, which are the basis of its functioning (Outhwaite, 1987). And because ordering structures have to be derived from representations, which are our reflective attempts at revealing our symbolic immersion or facticity, and we are not able to completely do so, they are always incomplete.

An associated difficulty is pursued by Outhwaite (1987), who suggests that the nature of particular social structures can be treated as definitional. This means that the central problems of social science concept formation - the picking out of the essential features of the world for basic terms - involve arbitrary definitions (e.g., alienation,

authority, and power). At the centre of this is the question of the appropriateness of the use of positivist science for explaining the nature of the social world. However, this problem of explanatory structures is not just confined to the social world. In the natural sciences the use of explanatory devices which are not actually observed, such as waves and fields, is also common (Crotty, 1998).

The modern experience is characterised by change. This change is associated with rapid technological development and a social re-ordering (Berman cited in Boyne and Rattansi, 1990). It also involves a belief in the power and potential of reason and science to allow a control of both the natural and the social. Consequently, sociology, as an outgrowth of modernism, has concentrated on understanding the social structures involved in the modern world, but has tended to ignore the existential difficulties of individuals living in a largely de-sacralised and unstable time. Indeed, Docherty (1993) argues that the enlightenment is aimed at emancipation from myth, superstition and the enchantment of mysterious powers and forces of nature through critical reason. As such it sets out to think the natural world in an abstract form and to question any animistic enchantment.

There are then, two sides to modernism. One, involving a progressive emancipatory hope and the other involving an existential despair - a loss of values, faith and purpose. Both of these are associated with the strength of science, which is so successful at the practical level it has no need for legitimation. This undermines the need for narrative and stories which then begin to lose their legitimating and symbolic function (Boyne & Rattansi, 1990). Consequently, there is a tension in modernism between an 'implicit faith' in representations acting in a symbolic fashion (ideology), (i.e., being reality), and the undermining of symbolic forms of life by such representations (e.g., science).

In summary, the modern can be seen to involve a reflexive type of thinking that allows us to 'stand aside' and understand our-'selves' and our social environment (Lash, 1990). Consequently, modernity has also involved a differentiation of the cultural from the social. This has allowed 'representation' of the social world in ideas. This reflexivity also involves 'looking behind the facade' which, taken to its logical conclusion, becomes an unstable, infinite regression (Lawson, 1985). Modern thought avoids this regression by positing a 'real' world, of which ideas (as cultural systems) are merely representations. This allows it to be conceptualised 'objectively', and subsequently to be abstracted and

universalised. The modern could be characterised as an era of 'discovery'; we discover the meanings in objects through reflexive separation.

However, Foucault argues that in the late modern *episteme* words are no longer signs that represent things indirectly to us, or even symbols that reveal things. Instead words now act as a self-referential discourse of a transcendental human subject with him or herself. In other words, before words act as representations, which they still do in the modern in a secondary sense, they have a genesis within the reflexive creation of the self. This late modern *episteme* requires no external support for its knowledge (e.g., nature) and the subject becomes fully the object of its own knowledge (i.e., the self). The western notion of 'man' (sic) is a product of the period of the modern (Kearney, 1986).

Dewey (cited in Holden, 2001) links this modern discovery of inner experiences as a realm of purely personal events, to Greek philosophy. The Greeks split knowledge (inner/mind) and action (outer/practical). This allowed the development of the experience of individuality as well as the experience as part of a common social group. Such individual experiencing is a counterpart to modern politics, art and religion. In the modern the individual is given room for movement (modern psychological experience) in contrast to the purely symbolic type of experience. For Dewey, what is at risk of being forgotten, and revealed in Foucault's description above, is that the inner experience is dependent upon an extension of language and that this is a social product. Dewey highlights the notion of a narrative based selfhood (Holden, 2001).

Here modernity provides the ultimate realisation of humanism. This is however, Foucault suggests, now beginning to crumble, as science itself begins to dismantle the subjective knower. This change is to the epoch of the postmodern, where humanity's knowledge of itself does not confirm the humanist notion of a transcendently free and creative subject, but indeed breaks it down. We become aware of unconscious and linguistic structures that predetermine 'free' activities. As has been already set out in preceding sections (see Sections 2.2.4, 2.3.1) words no longer refer to things (symbols) or to representations of things (signs) but rather to words themselves - language speaks itself. Here the humanist rule of reason is undermined by the anti-humanistic rule of language (Kearney, 1986).

2.4.2 The postmodern episteme

Lash (1990) characterises postmodernism, as being a spatial and temporal 'cultural paradigm'. It involves the consuming of the social into the cultural where representations take on more fully the role of the symbolic. This includes changes in the relations between the type of cultural objects produced, the method of their distribution, and the relations between the signifier, signified and the referent (Lash, 1990). These changes can be seen as either involving a historical 'regression', in progressive modernist terms, or a 'recollection' of a lost understanding in postmodern terms.

Both Foucault's and Lash's (1990) analyses are themselves modern in that they allow a standing apart from the social world in which we exist in order to analyze it (i.e., a split between the cultural and social). The postmodern 'regime of signification' or *episteme* would deny the ability for such an analysis. It is in this sense that the postmodern becomes reflexively incoherent.

In modernism the role of the signifier, signified and referent are clearly defined. In post-modernism they become blurred, and the problem of separating the representation from reality occurs. Baudrillard (cited in Barnes, 1993) suggests that the confusion over the representation and the real creates a world of 'simulacra'. One is not simulacrum and the other reality; there are only simulacra. Here, tracing the source of the real becomes impossible. For example, the media and the masses interact; in this interaction who and what are the masses becomes untraceable as they are both reflected by, and created in the media. The social as an identity becomes lost. It no longer being a rational structure that can be systematically revealed (Barnes, 1993). This can be described as a new kind of symbolism. It could also be considered a new type of ideology.

In modernism, representations (theories, etc.) are seen as a problem, as they are not always seen to be in correlation with reality. Consequently, modernist cultural production is aimed at developing better theories, that more closely reflect the real world (Lash, 1990). However, in post-modern thought reality itself becomes the problem, as it becomes mixed up with representations and difficult to tease apart. Consequently, what the real may be becomes unstable. This occurs as the empirical social world becomes largely made up of images and representations. Indeed, the term 'real world' often refers to the economic, commercial world of advertising, representation and commodification. The postmodern has an aspect of 'irony', as the modern progressive notion of developing better theories (representations) becomes nonsensical. Indeed, the post-modern condition relates to

attempting to address how such representations undermine reality. This is a de-ordering of reality, which contrasts markedly with the modernist project of ordering it (Lash, 1990).

The rise of the domination of representation in society can be traced to developments in technology, particularly the emergence of electronic imaging and its dissemination. The developments in communication and electronic reproduction also opened up a whole new mass audience for 'high culture' (Lash, 1990). This situation involves a set of symbols, around which revolves a relatively stable set of identities focused on commodification. Youth culture is a good example here. However, this 'commodified' reality, based on representations, is also unstable and artificial. It does not promote or allow distancing in order to critique it, and as such it is fundamentally unreflexive. Commodification of mass culture is not new, having started in the late 19th century. It has its origins in modernism where it was based on use-value. Commodification in post-modernism is of a different order, it is concerned with 'sign value' (image) rather than 'use value' (usefulness) (Lash, 1990). Consequently there are no limits on consumption, as there are always new styles for consumers to acquire (e.g., new models of cars, fashion). Many of these products have a built in redundancy that is linked to capitalism's underlying requirement for continuous growth (Lash, 1990).

Figure 2.1

The central themes of the regimes of signification discussed in the text.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Pre-modern</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No reflexive separation- Complete immersion- No culture/social split- Symbolic use of language- Grounding in non-human world |
| 2. <i>Modern</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reflexive separation and underlying 'reality'- No immersion recognised- A culture/social split- Representational use of language- Grounding in underlying 'reality' |
| 3. <i>Mainstream postmodern</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Unlimited reflexivity and no underlying reality- Complete immersion- No culture/social split- Symbolic use of language- No grounding |
| 4. <i>Reflexive symbolism</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reflexive awareness of immersion- A culture/social split- Representational and symbolic use of language- Grounding in local experience. |
-

2.4.3 A reflexive symbolism

The postmodern involves a return to the symbolic, as a merging of representation and reality. However, this is a different type of symbolic understanding than the pre-modern, which had its grounding in interaction with the natural world. At this postmodern level of *representational dedifferentiation* deeper thought is discouraged. What is

important is purely the interactions of the 'obvious' level of the material world, as any deeper reality is indiscernible in the unstable interplay of representations. Any attempts to move beyond this 'surface layer', thinking becomes very reflexive, and consequently unstable, as there is no true reality seen to be underlying it (Lawson, 1985). This reflexive instability can be taken to its extreme in nihilism, or essentially ignored in pragmatism. Here reflexivity is exposed as involving a play of surface representations, which falls into a type of symbolism that denies critique (i.e., an ideology). This position can be described as a conservative post-modernism.

To avoid this requires that language is recognised to be in some way representational. In that it is able to talk about itself with reference to something outside itself in order to reveal and critique its own structures. However, there is a need to be careful not to fall into a modern separationist (objective) epistemology. An opening for this middle ground can be found in the postmodern cultural differentiation towards the 'local' as modern universalising representational discourses are put into question (Kvale, 1995). At this *cultural level of differentiation*, lies an 'oppositional' post-modernism where the seeds are present for developing a grounded reflexivity that entails changing an emphasis from language onto experience. Such a position is a mixing of post-modern and modern (i.e., a mix of 'regimes of signification') that I will call 'reflexive symbolism'. This, in short, is a reflexivity that recognises our immersion. It involves a characterisation of language that is aware that it is not fundamentally representational (see Figure 2.1).

As an example, we know, through reflexive thought that symbols mediate our interpretation of the world. However, in doing so they no longer act as symbols in a pure form. Consequently, what we cannot make, for example, are new myths, rather they evolve, and the very moment we realise that they are myths is the moment they are no longer myths (Lovibond, 1993). In this revealing of the pure symbolic there is a raising of consciousness toward the problem of our immersion. This is a point that is highlighted in Heidegger's philosophy, Ricoeur's 'semantic challenge' and Gadamer's notion of prejudice. In a reflexive symbolic understanding, we are able develop both a critique of myth and ideology within a recognition of its importance, and of our inability to reveal it fully. This sort of approach may also be described as a rupture or deformation of the closure of metaphysics that occurred in modern foundational thought. Such a rupture allows an opening for a new understanding (Sallis, 1986).

This approach allows some separation for an ethic (is/ought split) with an immersive aspect which I will link with the tacit and ontological as a poetic in chapter 3. This connects the individual back to tradition, while allowing space for a reflexive comprehension of their position. It requires emphasis on experience, as it is the genesis of changing and adapting tradition, through new speech acts, so allowing distantation and critique. Such experience, I will argue, needs to be with the non-human world if a tradition is not just to become disconnected and 'self-obsessed' humanism; an ungrounded civilisation, either caught up in its own ability to manipulate and control (modernism), or absorbed into the complexity of its own idealistic mental and physical productions (conservative post-modernism).

What is highlighted is the notion that the world is much more than we can ever be reflexively aware. It lies pregnant with meaning as Merleau-Ponty has suggested (Crotty, 1998). More basically, we are 'in it' with language and our bodies. Here 'real structures' are embedded both in language and the world, which are not in any sense separate. This too resolves the problem of reflexivity, as it is an internal problem within language - the perceptual world itself does not slip into reflective paradox, it continues.

Chapter 3

Experience, Being, ethics and poetics

"...when the generative earth is abruptly defined as a determinate object devoid of its own sensations and feelings, then the sense of a wild and multiplicitous...must migrate, either into a supersensory heaven beyond the natural world, or else into the human skull itself - the only allowable refuge in this world, for what is ineffable and unfathomable"

(Abram, 1996, p.10)

3.0 Introduction and overview

In chapter 2 I discussed an interpretive understanding of social life that is based on a constructionist epistemology. This highlighted the interaction between the individual, tradition, language and the 'world'. It also exposed tensions in being clear about these relationships that centrally involved a play between closeness and distance, immersion and separation. In doing this I broke up our existence into ontological, tacit, and reflexive aspects (see figure 3.1) and attempted to explain the role of language in two of these; the tacit through the hermeneutics of Ricoeur, and the reflexive through modern and postmodern understandings of language. What was proposed is that our existence is unable to be fully exposed in language, and indeed the role of language in this is unable to be made fully clear. This position was developed into a *reflexive symbolic* understanding that emphasises experience.

This third chapter will develop this *reflexive symbolic* understanding further by highlighting individual experience as the basis for a guide to our relation to the non-human world. This involves re-emphasising the aspect of our immersion that Ricoeur downplays in his hermeneutic approach, that is the relation between humans, language and the extra-linguistic (extra-symbolic) world. This comprises the pre-ontological intentionality that already comprehends the world, rather than just the tacit and precognitive symbolic considerations of Ricoeur. It is an ontological position and follows Heidegger into Being and metaphysics. This concern for Being becomes central to the development of an environmental ethic.

Figure 3.1

Aspects of reflexive symbolism (being-in-the-world)

A. *Reflexive* (separation)

1. Conceptual

B. *Symbolism* (immersion)

1. Tacit (social imaginary)

2. Ontological (Being)

The first part elaborates the *reflexive symbolic* understanding towards developing a relationship between ethics and poetics. It does this through initially discussing the difference between perception and conception. This in turn allows the proposal of an interactive understanding of the origin of values that highlights the perceptual. Subsequently, this is used to support the notion of intrinsic worth as a respect for autonomy. Following this, the relation between narrative and ethics is emphasised through Ricoeur's hermeneutics.

The second part develops Heidegger's understanding of the ontological poetic. First, through his explication of Being, and second by showing how it is related to wildness. A link to Being and nature is made through Heidegger's notion of primordial nature. I then discuss what form an appreciation of primordial nature, as fuller understanding of nature, might take that includes moods, meditational thinking, embodiment and language.

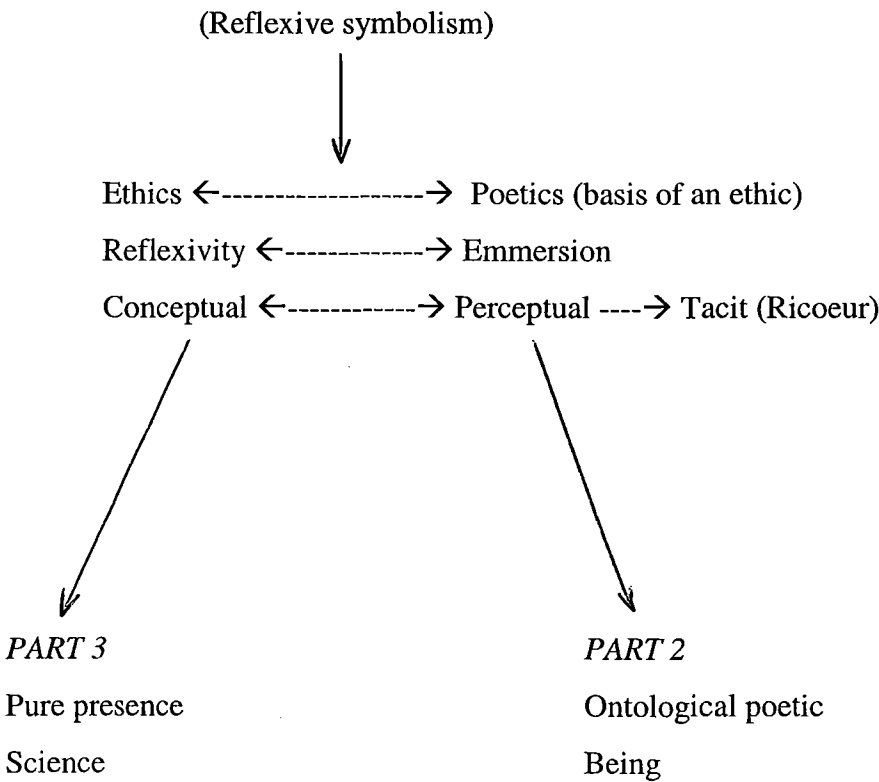
The third part involves a consideration of science. This consideration is initially made via a discussion of Heidegger's deconstruction of western metaphysics. This deconstruction highlights the narrowness of a purely objective understanding of the natural world and in particular a scientific one. Support for this development also comes from within the philosophy of science itself, although from a different angle. This leads to a discussion of a scientific paradigm that highlights the natural world as consisting of open

systems that in turn supports the importance of a fuller relation with the natural world (see Figure 3.2).

Finally, in the conclusion, I integrate a poetic understanding with ethical praxis. Here praxis can be seen as involving the ongoing acts of decision making which are ordered by tradition to which the poetic, as a ‘source’ of surplus, pluralism, creativity and imagination, is an indispensable guide. However, it is also in praxis that the poetic may be encountered, so they are in no way separate. Such a combination is expressed in tradition as ritual.

Figure 3.2
Relationship between the parts of chapter 3

PART 1



3.1 Ethics and Poetics

3.1.1 Perception and conception

In Foucault's depiction of the modern *episteme*, experience can be seen as a discourse within which the subject is conscious of itself, and from this a new true object issues. This is a dialectical movement where consciousness reflects upon itself, affecting both its self-knowledge and the object of reflection (Jardine, 1993). In the phenomenological notion of intentionality, where consciousness is seen as being of the world, the emphasis moves away from an appropriation of the real by the subject, to the subject (consciousness) being appropriated by reality (Sokolowski, 2000). Here, experience changes from that which could be reflected upon, which Husserl still emphasizes in his development of the transcendental ego, to that which is not reflected upon - that which exceeds mastery. Consequently, experience is what disturbs the subject as present to itself. This involves limits to reflexivity consistent with a *reflexive symbolic* understanding and has parallels with Giddens's view of social science where the social world exceeds mastery. In addition, the former understanding of experience is implicit in Heidegger's notion of *Dasein*. In Heidegger's later work his emphasis on language tends towards the notion of experience as that which is unmastered (Sokolowski, 2000). This is an interest in pre-reflective experience (i.e., before it is theorised), and so before 'self'.

This correlates with what Kohak (1992) describes as perception; "any experience in which the subject encounters a content that is autonomously given, not a product of the act of perceiving only" (p.173). Such experience is pre-reflective in the sense that we see before we think. Not to do so would rob the world of any novelty. This is not, however, to propose that perception is pre-linguistic or pre-cultural (i.e., pure perception) as the meaningful reality produced by these affect, or filter what we see. Rather, it is an ordered context, which Husserl calls the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), and that is pre-reflectively value laden. Kohak's (1992) notion of the perceptual resolves from our facticity based in experience and emphasises our embodiment. Shepard (1993) describes the perceptual as a precognitive act that "directs attention... favours preferences... and governs sensory emphasis" (p.77). So it acts as "a kind of foreknowledge of assumptions and inclinations." (p.77). As such it becomes an embodied style of directed attention that resolves from

tradition. As will be discussed, the above description of the perceptual links Merleau-Ponty's embodiment, Heidegger's ontological, and Ricoeur's hermeneutic concerns. In contrast, conception is any reflective attempt on the part of the subject to order or categorise what they have perceived (Kohak, 1992).

3.1.2 The origin of values

The significance of the above understanding of perception comes when considering the problem of values and their origins. 'Modernist' value theories characterise individuals as reified moral subjects, that is as autonomous 'value givers' (Schrage, 1986), and the non-human world, as a set of objects in which facts are 'discovered', and also idealistically, as a valueless void upon which humans, as subjective valuers, apply significance (Schrage, 1986). This relates to the subject as an epistemological 'knower' of a real world of which we make mental representations. This notion of an object having a functional representation in the mind implies a subject/object split, which is to say the split of objectively derived facts from subjectively derived values. Values are subjective judgments that are ultimately derived from facts (Vardy, 1999).

Gadamer exposes this position when he argues that the experience of beauty is understood as a subject's way of perceiving rather than a perception of the beautiful. So valuing something is relegated to the conceptual. Beauty, as a subjective judgment is made after the objective fact (Kohak, 1992). For example, the mystical call of the South Island Kokako or the resonant booming of the Kakapo become mere subjective experiences that can be explained as facts involving formations of sound waves that are produced by a certain species of birds. These in turn trigger a set of subjective emotional responses in individuals who then apply value or importance to these specific experiences that are mediated by their individual and cultural histories. Nature and landscape become inert backgrounds upon which through, "poetic experiences", become "mythically coloured" (Foltz, 1995, p. 10). By only interacting with a human built world such an account becomes reinforced. Here, cities are seen as not only physical, but also as emotional and value productions of humans, including the power and economic relations associated with them.

In contrast, Kohak (1992) suggests that something we value is something we perceive. In other words, we encounter it on the pre-reflective level, first and foremost. The haunting beauty of the call of the South Island Kokako occurs in the moment of its hearing

(perception), not in its subsequent analysis. From a phenomenological understanding our originary involvement as a being-in-the-world means that nature and landscape are first and foremost mythical. It is 'facts' rather than 'values', to use this way of understanding the world, that are secondary. The world is always already meaningful. It is already ordered to some extent as we are part of it; we are radically embodied (Kohak, 1993). Indeed, the Romantic movement is misunderstood if it is just considered as an emotionally based aesthetic. Rather it was an attempt to integrate the cognitive and affective - to re-mythologise the world (Shepard, 1993). This highlighting of the embodied perceptual aspect of experience used here is developed by Merleau-Ponty.

3.1.3 Merleau-Ponty and incarnate experience

As has been pointed out above, humans are embodied active beings and as biological entities, and excluding cultural and linguistic conditioning, the world is already value laden and meaningfully ordered (Kohak, 1993). Merleau-Ponty's approach to phenomenology emphasises this embodiment. He sees the body not as merely another object among objects, but rather as a way of belonging in the world. This belonging is fundamentally expressed in our perceptual gestures and speech (Kearney, 1986). Following Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty suggests there is no 'inner' person, humans are first and foremost in the world; we only know ourselves in the historical world of our incarnate existence (with others). For Merleau-Ponty consciousness and the world overlap, which is what he called the 'lived body' (Kearney, 1986).

What is central and distinctive about Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is his proposal that the human intellect is an elaboration of the deep creativity already existing in immediate bodily perception. For Merleau-Ponty the relation between experience and knowledge is people's way of borrowing structure from the world (Holden, 2001). The corporeal world, in which the lived body exists, has a specific structure, existing at both a proximity and a distance. At a distance it has an horizon that is always present, one that encourages perceptual exploration. The world, Merleau-Ponty believes, is fundamentally structured in depth, from the near to the far. Such depth always involves an ambiguity in perception (i.e., the near may seem far and vice versa). Also, the horizon always involves an absence, something always lies just beyond it (concealed by it), that we can never reach. In the perceptual world things can never be seen all at once, they are always withholding some aspect of themselves for further exploration. Consequently, Merleau-Ponty sees

depth as the first dimension, the most primordial. Its ambiguity and concealing allows freedom of our body to choose various aspects to focus upon (Abram, 1995).

Significantly, depth is not posited by the mind but is already there. It is not just one perceptual phenomenon among others; it gives perception and exposes our immersion in the world. Indeed, we are immersed between the earth and the sky, which always close together at the horizon as the coherent unity of the visible. The earth and sky are not two distinct entities but are the world as the earth. For Merleau-Ponty the earth is not the abstract entity we call the 'universe', but the experienced unity of the local perceptual world, which envelops us. We live *in* the earth not on it. The earth sits between the universe and ourselves both literally and metaphorically, between the material and the imagination. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty asserts that all theories come out of, and are sustained by, the structures of the perceptual world (Abram, 1995). They are not, otherworldly (Platonism), innate (Cartesianism), *a priori* (Kantian), or a straight mechanical impression on the blank mind (empiricism) (Kearney, 1986).

For Merleau-Ponty, our perceptual acts are never simply neutral expressions of our facticity; rather, they are stylised bodily gestures, which involve the use of imagination that is derived from perception. Our perceptual style is the foundation of our carnal interrelationship with others. From the outset our perceptual style expresses a particular project of being-in-the-world, and involves an ordering of patterns of meaning. Consequently, Merleau-Ponty believes that artistic forms of gesture (e.g., painting) provide privileged access to the hidden workings of language (Kearney, 1986). Scientific expression sits as a second order objective universality, rather than the pre-objective universality of art. In both cases, universality is a project rather than an acquisition, as neither are able to produce a totalising universal. Consequently, it leaves space to develop regional perceptual styles, as the body subject is incarnate in particular environments.

3.1.4 Values, ethics and poetics

In this important, but difficult section I attempt to extend the above concerns of valuing over into ethics. Ethics, is a consideration of the good of *acts* towards, the 'other' (Kearney, 1995). Here the other can be understood as the not self, and the self as being reflexively formed. This in turn involves a question of our understanding of how the other's value is constituted, that in turn implies a normative engagement. The previous sections (see Sections 3.1.1, 3.1.2) suggest that using the subjective valuer (an autonomous

self) as a starting point fundamentally misaligns the relation between humans and the 'other' or non-human world, and so undermines the possibility of the development of a genuine ethic. I suggest that the 'other' should be considered as constituted first within the perceptual before it is reflexively considered.

As suggested, ethics involves making decisions about practical actions. Consequently, ethical acts require distinctions or a categorisation to be made. It is what Aristotle called *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. This considers actions and ends within a context where human selves, in living along side others, discover an *ethos* that binds them to others in a community or tradition (Kearney, 1995). However, as has been a theme so far, an *ethos* would not be a 'discovery' in any pure sense, but rather a given, as a being-in-the-world. This questions the domination of the conceptual process of applying values then consequently comparing them to decide the correct ethical decision. Rather, as will be developed in the following sections, values and ethics come out of the social, embodied, poetic and conceptual as interpenetrating. This approach to ethics can be distinguished from morality, as a strict set of rules (deontological), and from utilitarianism, as the conceptual process of weighting up costs and benefits of alternative acts.

In order to develop this further I take up Kohak's (1992) suggestions that perception of the other may involve purely pragmatic concerns such as obtaining shelter and eating. In this sense our perception (pre-reflective) of things involves an ordering of them as either facilitating or hindering our actions. These are the values involved in our everyday concerns where we interact with things in a practical and productive manner and what Heidegger calls ready-at-hand (Foltz, 1995). Heidegger suggests that our primary access is through praxis, as before something can be an object of a disinterested gaze it must be firstly disclosed by means of our concerned dealings or interactions. This occurs before the distinction between facts and values (Foltz, 1995). These are what Kohak (1992) describes as pre-reflective utilitarian values. I suggest they are primarily tacit in that the form of such concerns are embodied in tradition as an *ethos*.

Kohak (1992) points out another primary perception of value. To explain this he quotes Husserl's example of touching one's own body. When the right hand touches the left hand, the touch involves the perception of an object in a manipulable and utilitarian sense. But the left is also part of the I, so is sensed as an object "with its own inner autonomy, calling not only for manipulation, but for respect" (p.175). This self-recognition of the I's autonomy manifest in the 'other' hand suggests that other I (bodies) also call for

respect in their autonomy. Indeed, it is their very 'otherness', that calls for respect, where things in the world are not mere extensions of the individual or collective human ego, but rather they have 'intrinsic worth' in their being (Kohak, 1992). This is distinct from 'intrinsic value' where values lie objectively and independently in the world and are derived from the conceptual. Rather, intrinsic worth is an interactive understanding of value derived from perceptual experience (Drenthen, 1999).

When the world involves intrinsic worth, categories of use (for ethics) are not enough, as the world is not understood to be just made up of functional things. However, such utilitarian categorising allows discrimination that makes choices possible. Kohak (1992) argues that ideally the perception of the relative value of utility influences but does not displace the perception of intrinsic worth. As such it places limits on purely utilitarian considerations by invoking a humbleness and respect towards what is used. This intrinsic worth perception, I suggest, is primarily ontological in its form in that it resolves from mystery and autonomy. It involves not just the being of entities but of Being itself. So all beings are other and as such deserve respect. This is a respect that derives from their very beingness that is beyond purely utilitarian considerations at both the perceptual and conceptual levels. This respect is embodied in the ontological poetic (*poiesis*), and lies as the *basis* of an ethic. It is discussed in more detail in Part 3.2.

In original Greek usage chaos becomes cosmos through the act of *poiesis*. *Poiesis* was a making or ordering, a creation that involves making existing things from non-existing things- out of mystery. In this respect, *poiesis* has links with the notion of *logos* where interactive use of language 'makes' an order, or 'world'. It was both artistic and divine, intellectual and manual. It can take many forms that include art, craft and poems (Kearney, 1995). Aristotle contrasted it with *praxis*. *Praxis* is an act, which contains its end within itself, while *poiesis* is any productive activity having an end or value beyond itself. (Kearney, 1995). *Poiesis* is more approximate, provisional, and contingent than calculable knowledge of theory. In short it arises from the lived world of experience and it is in this that it has an alliance with ethics, as a dwelling with others (*ethos*) (Kearney, 1995).

Ricoeur relates *poiesis* to the creative processes of semantic innovation in individual expressions in speech that are carried in myth, metaphor, symbols and dreams as a social imaginary. This in turn is embodied in tradition and narrative as stories and practices as an *ethos* (Kearney, 1995). I propose, following Kohak's (1992) notion of intrinsic worth, that it is a respect for mystery from individual perceptual experiences, that

is the basis of *poiesis* and so an *ethos*. This primary perceptual notion of valuing is communicated, via stories, into the social imaginary as a guide for perceptual practical valuing of *praxis*. Such conduct, as *praxis*, is the final end of *poiesis* (see figures 3.3 and 3.4) (Kearney, 1995)

The role of narrative and stories in ethics is further developed in the following section through a brief discussion of narrative and selfhood.

Figure 3.3
The general relation between Poiesis, Ethos and Praxis.

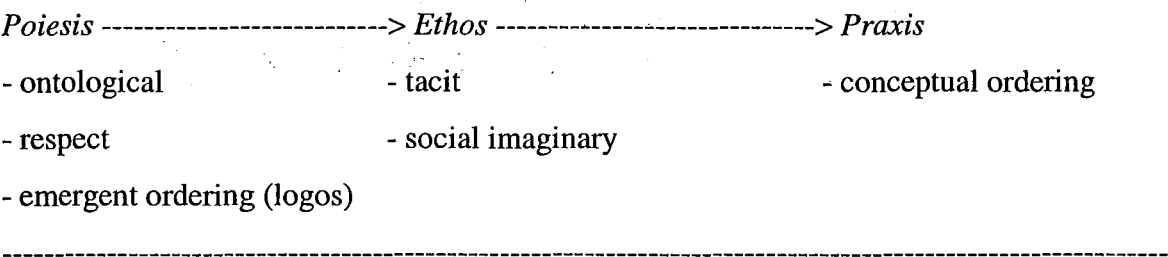


Figure 3.4

The relationship between ethics and poetics in the *reflexive symbolic* regime of signification.

A. Conceptual

1. Reflexivity - (*praxis*)

- 1. Ethic – reflexive categorising (conceptual)

B. Perceptual

1. Tacit - (*ethos*)

- 1. Ethic - *praxis* in tradition (perceptual categorising)
- 2. Language (as the social imaginary (poetic))

2. Ontological - (*poiesis*)

- 1. Embodiedness (sensuous experience)
- 2. Contemplation
- 3. Language (as *logos*)

3.1.5 Narrative and ethics (*ethos*)

As has been discussed in section 2.2.4 any understanding of self through self-conception is mediated through the social imaginary, that includes ideology and myth. Ricoeur suggests that the social imaginary is related to ethics, which he understands to involve a pursuit of virtue or goodness in relation to the other. For Ricoeur, the production of stories in a community, as a recollection and imaginative projection of possible worlds, are thought experiments where we learn to think the ethical aspects of human conduct as framed by the plot of the stories. It is in the composing of stories within a tradition that we develop an ethical identity as an individual and community (Kearney, 1995).

Macintyre (1984 cited in Gare, 1998) suggests that people can only arrange themselves in society through being told stories. These enable them to understand and take up their positions within the stories, which they are living out. This involves an interrelated

set of narratives that define the individual as a member of a number of connected institutions such as a family, a community, a workplace, a country and so on. They are also the basis of individual lifeworlds and intersubjective structures of feeling that, as has already been discussed, are derived from the collective experience of everyday living. It is here that myths and narratives are consciously expressed to reveal 'feelings' of place - as narratives of the lifeworld expressing immersion and connectivity (Knox, 1982).

People find themselves part of a history of each institution (e.g., the Department of Conservation) with its tradition and associated practices. Like Gadamer, Macintyre (1984 cited in Gare, 1998) sees individuals as being subservient to narratives. The dominating social and political patterns are shaped chiefly by what most individuals 'believe' at a tacit (sub-verbal) level (i.e., embodied in the narratives they are living out, and on which institutions and practices are based). In other words, narratives are lived before they are reflected upon. They define the good and the kind of life that is required in the quest for the good. How the good is defined in narrative relies upon assumptions about human nature, about society, and includes theological and metaphysical assumptions (Putman, 1981 cited in Gare, 1998). Thus, cultures involve webs of meaning that have the ability to amplify basic human capacities. Our dependence on these narratives makes individuals vulnerable to distorted forms of understanding, and consequently selfhood, which may be economically successful but ecologically unsustainable (Kidner, 1998). The implication of this is that to live in an ecologically sustainable manner we may need a different set of narratives to live by.

As implied in Riceour's hermeneutic emphasis on narrative's role in defining the temporal, narrative is distinct from retelling historical facts. It involves the use of the hermeneutic imagination as the narrator invokes the past, and creates a rendering of it in the mind of the listener. This may well have an ethical aspect in that an empathy with the past is invoked, to bring something foreign closer (Kearney, 1995). Story telling about endangered species management may entail the recognition of a responsibility toward endangered species through invoking the imagination in stories of extinct species. For example, imagining forests full with Moa and Huia, and giant eagles. These are stories that involve plots about loss. This involves developing empathy with 'other' non-human life as well as with the human past. Stories of past human lives in New Zealand, such as the Moa hunters or European pioneer families breaking-in the land, stand somewhat in conflict with these conservation narratives. However, they are vital to it, as it is only through an

empathetic consideration of past decisions in different lives (both human and non-human) that we are able to project a future and make decisions accordingly. Consequently, innovations in ways of living are made through alternative narrative plots. In story telling people are drawn into new situations and characters (fictional) so challenging their taken-for-granted horizon of expectations. This allows the taking up of a new or alternative narrative structure to change the way their lives are lived (Gare, 1998).

Ricoeur (Kearney, 1995) also suggests that stories are central to a subjective identity. They tell the actions of a life, of a 'who'. The identity of this 'who' is a hermeneutic narrative that entails the ongoing task of reinterpretation of itself in the light of new and old stories we tell about ourselves. Such an identity centres on a self-consistency and self-rectification requiring the imagination to synthesise the different horizons of the past, present and future. However, it is still fundamentally a social self. It is through socialisation that a person acquires a self-identity capable of projecting a narrative into the world where they are both an actor and an author. Acquiring self-knowledge does not involve exposing a self-enclosed ego; rather it involves the exposing of a hermeneutically defined life. It knows itself by retelling itself in an ongoing reinterpretation or retelling. It is also always a public life, in that, it is informed by the narratives of its culture. A culture with certain narratives produces certain types of selves (Kearney, 1995).

For Macintyre (cited in Gare, 1998) it is the tradition itself that has the resources, if it is healthy, for its own adaptation through self-criticism. However, there is not just one tradition within a culture but a group of interrelated and possibly competing narratives. Consequently, Macintyre risks putting too much emphasis on narratives themselves rather than the individual's ability to create new ones and change old ones, as individuals are in some sense the authors of the narratives they live out. Indeed, with my emphasis on the perceptual there are limits placed on the force of narrative. They give room for the development of individual counter narratives to challenge the dominant narratives of selfhood (Gare, 1998). This relates to the surplus incumbent in the social imaginary and individual experiences that allows distantation and critique (Kearney, 1995).

Any narrative identity is equivalent to the self-consistency in a moment of decision, as this is where its continuation and cohesion lies. This is an ethical moment; "[a] moment that makes *ethical responsibility* the highest factor in self-consistency" (Kearney, 1995, p. 101). Such a moment of decision requires: First, an elusiveness, as if all is known no

decisions need to be made. Second, a poetic, as alternative understandings are required. This requires that the narrative identity never forgets its origins in the narrative imagination of poetics, experience and Being, that allows the projection of alternative narratives through surplus and distantation. Third, the decision is based in praxis (experiential world), which stops the 'other' (not self) been reducible to the narrative of text. This also places limits on the free play of the imagination, when confronted with the irreducible otherness of the other (see figure 3.5).

Fig 3.5

Ethical decisions require:

1. - An ability to categorise (conceptual)
 2. - A perceptually derived respect for other (*poiesis*)
 3. - An elusiveness (surplus) to allow a projection of alternative outcomes (*ethos*)
-

3.2 Heidegger and the being of nature

In this part I will discuss more fully the constitution of the perceptual 'other' within an ontologically based poetics. This is done in order to support the notion that an ethic first and foremost arises from an experiential interaction with the other, which in this case is the non-human, and from which stories and language emerge. Significantly, Heidegger argues that the ontological poetic risks becoming lost as the experiential relation with the natural world becomes dominated by the conceptual. In order to clarify this I will discuss what Heidegger was critiquing in present understandings of the ontology of nature. This will be considered in part 3 of this chapter through a discussion of Heidegger's deconstruction of Western metaphysics.

3.2.1 Heidegger and Being

Heidegger's deconstruction of Western metaphysics involved tracing the development of the understanding of Being in western thought. This was to serve several

purposes. The first involves the hermeneutic imperative of recollecting the past in order to project a future. Such a recollection also allows a distantiation from the present and so an ability to critique it (Kearney, 1995). The second purpose involves Heidegger's attempts to upset usual ways of understanding things, and for this he casts back to what he considers more authentic and original ways of understanding (Lawson, 1986). This upsetting of 'usual ways of thinking' involves a necessary obscurity, and Heidegger's terminology is notorious for being unclear (Cupitt, 1998). This obscurity has two purposes. The first is to show the constraints of the Western philosophical tradition, while recognising that he himself is entwined in it. In other words, he has to rely on the tradition, and its categories of thought, in order to criticize that tradition. Heidegger is aware that any attempt to think beyond a tradition (i.e., upsetting usual ways of thinking), risks finding itself expressed in the terms of the very tradition it seeks to transcend. Indeed, his critique involves an analysis of the tradition in order to uncover its prejudices. However, the prejudices that he uncovers are inevitably present in his own analysis. Indeed, the prejudice that prejudices should be uncovered is central to the Western tradition, being an aspect of the scientific 'objective' approach (Lawson, 1986).

The second reason for his obscurity, is that he wishes to show the elusive and distant, but also close and obvious, character of Being itself (Kearney, 1986). For this Heidegger uses reflexivity. Reflexivity acts as an unsettling mechanism in that it stretches or deforms thought and language. This is because it undermines any attempt at a closure of thinking because it always involves a continued questioning of itself. The instability produced (see Section 2.3.1) is an attempt to force thinking outside language, while presenting what is outside as fundamentally elusive. Thus it is a way to show that which cannot be shown (Lawson, 1986). Because Heidegger is seeking such a move his thought is not critical or 'reasoned' thinking, as this is the very type of thinking that dominates the tradition and which he is trying to avoid. His extensive use of etymology, for example, to examine the tradition is not entirely aimed at correcting meanings, but also, at disturbing our reliance of the usual use of words (Lawson, 1986).

It is already clear that Being, in its systematic elusiveness, is not something that can be observed or described in the normal manner. As such, Heidegger is unable to offer a prescription for its meaning. (Lawson, 1986). Indeed, Heidegger saw meaning and Being as distinct, and following Kant, suggests that "Being is not a real predicate" (Cupitt, 1998, p.168). This suggests that Being should not be treated as a meaning. Meaning is

encapsulated within language, that is a complex sign system of interconnected senses. Being is a 'non-word', that stands outside a sign system and is prior to it. Consequently, it is something that cannot be conceptualised. Rather it 'feeds' language and thinking. Because of this, Heidegger puts it under erasure (he literally crosses it out). However, Cupitt (1998) suggests it is really much more useful to say Being is its own becoming; a pure contingency in a continuing 'process' of forthcoming; as the unfolding of all things in time. Its erasure highlights its elusiveness to language, while becoming suggests Being as an infinite turning and renewal. It is something we can only ever just *wait upon* (Cupitt, 1998). This is not a metaphysical realism, involving an eternal being outside and prior to time. The latter involves a division of the world of becoming, which is the contingent world of ordinary human experience of transient phenomena, from the world of Being, which is described as timeless, eternal and self-subsistent and encased in symbols such as God, pure reason and Truth. Heidegger rejects such a split, and indeed, reverses our everyday understanding of what is basic and what is derivative. Being as, coming to be, (*alethia*) becomes primary, and *ousia* (presence) is derivative (Cupitt, 1998).

Because Being can only be 'pointed' to in language it requires the use of metaphors that suggest such unknowing (Cupitt, 1998). This is done through not linking Being to something that is already known, but to a 'not-known'. These types of metaphors are 'anti-metaphorical', in that they are the use of metaphor in a non-metaphorical way. This is an unsettling use of language, causing a rupture in the way we speak of the world in a coherent way, so revealing language's limits (Cupitt, 1998). Metaphors used for Being include: contingency (Cupitt, 1998), nothing (Buddhism (Cupitt, 1998)), becoming, unground (Heidegger (Seebhom, 1994)), fountain, chance (Kundera, 1984), possibility (Kant (Kearney, 1995)), endless return (Nietzsche (Cupitt, 1998)), an intangible continuum (Hawking, 1998), and creativity (Whitehead (Clarke, 1993)). The central theme here is how to speak of Being without objectifying it.

Heidegger's recollection of Being stresses the understanding of Being held by the early Greeks that emphasises Being's hiddenness. This withdrawnness or reticence cannot be described, explained or even thought. So Being itself is always unthought. Consequently, retrieving the 'unthinkable' Being in its withdrawal in entities does not involve calculable thinking. Thinking can only ever be a response to Being in its self-withdrawal as a *poetic* (Foltz, 1995). It is because Being is what is covered up that phenomenology becomes paradoxical, as it seeks to uncover that which is hidden, but to do

so would mean that it is no longer hidden. Indeed, an unhidden Being is no longer Being (Lawson, 1986).

For the Greeks the terms *phusis*, *alethia* and *logos* designated the properties of the experience of Being. *Phusis*, is the emergence of something from itself, remaining for awhile while returning back into itself. *Phusis* did not originally designate physical entities, but an event aspect of Being as such. *Alethia*, is the unconcealment involving a 'space' into which entities can emerge from concealment. This concealment is a "sheltering where the essential possibility of emerging is preserved" (Foltz, 1995, p.13). Such sheltering Heidegger calls the 'earth'. The earth is from where *phusis* arises and holds its possibility. However, as such a source it remains intrinsically unknown itself. The earth can also be disclosed as an entity as is the usual understanding of the term. 'Devastation of the earth' then becomes the oppression of the ability to allow concealment (Foltz, 1995).

Logos is a gathering together that allows entities to be perceived, and so spoken of (Foltz, 1995). *Logos* interconnects Being to the 'world', the matrix of meaningfulness, which both is and allows language. The 'world' is the meaningful region in which we dwell that is gathered in *logos* (Foltz, 1995). It is the 'space' that is revealed or defined by language and cultural practices that is one of many possible worlds that could evolve through ongoing individual and cultural interaction with Being.

'Things' are not objects, or even what is disclosed by praxis as what is useful, but should seen as being related to the earth. They stand forth from the earth while remaining close to it, and so always retain an intrinsic absence. It is in our relation to things that the earth truly becomes earth. Such a relation involves a 'saving', which is to interact with something while letting it remain intact. This allows us to interact with the earth in a way that leaves space to let it over to its own possibilities. In short, 'saving the earth' involves placing limits on our needs to control and organise it. Such is 'dwelling', as acts of tending that grant leeway for 'things' to disclose themselves and endure. It should be noted that this does not deny use, but a use without domination. Such a situation is characterised by the term, *techne*. *Techne*, which along with *phusis*, is a kind of *poiesis*. *Techne* involves the bringing forth of something out of itself by the craftsman or artist, as they respond to the possibilities lying in the thing itself. This involves primarily a recognition or sympathy with the thing that is gained through the experience of interacting with it (Foltz, 1998). So 'dwelling on the earth' is not just an expression of an empirical situation but a post-metaphysical one that, Foltz (1995) proposes, is the basis for a new environmental ethic.

To encapsulate this section; Being can be understood as a temporal and historical event that is an outpouring of continuing emergence, of which the source can never be seen. Being itself, which is the pre-ontological, is observed in the brightness it grants entities. The world (as a meaningful matrix) and nature can only be understood as fully temporal in their being as entities, on the radical temporality of Being itself. Truth is an event of unconcealment (*alethia*) whereby being retains its concealment by returning back into itself (*phusis*). The subtleties of temporality, of Being, unconcealing, and unfolding are all related and framed within language. The language we currently use is bound by the 'world' in which we presently exist, expanding, changing, or evolving this, is an 'event of disclosure' (Foltz, 1995). This is a genesis, the world's coming into being, and is happening all the time in and through us as 'event', which is the ontological. What makes this so hard to describe is not its difficulty but its very closeness (Cupitt, 1998).

3.2.2 Wildness

Like other symbols, wildness has multiple meanings, which makes defining it difficult. Significantly, the metaphors for wildness are similar to the ones used for Being. As such wildness operates as a symbol that is used as a metaphor for the open uncontrolled contingency of the world. Also in parallel with Being, wildness becomes fundamentally elusive. However, there is also a distinction between Being and wildness. I suggest wildness can be understood as a core attribute of Being's manifestation in entities. So wildness is an aspect of Being.

Snyder (1993) links wildness directly with the Chinese 'Dao' way and describes it as: "eluding analysis, beyond categories, self organising, self-forming, playful, surprising, impermanent, independent, complete, orderly....." (p.27). So the wild is both empty and real at the same time. Wildness can be understood as it is perceived in experience in nature; as being temporary, intricate, changing, lucky, and contingent. As such the perception of wildness is a 'given' (Kohak, 1992). Indeed, wildness is the process and essence of nature. It is an ordering of impermanence, which Snyder (1993) suggests up until several hundred years ago, was the basic human experience

Wildness links with phenomenology where, like Being, it is a condition under which things can show themselves but does not normally show itself. Wildness then, is an attribute of the world. As a quality, it is not the kind of thing that can be collected or contained. Indeed, the world contains many things that exist but cannot be collected and

put somewhere (e.g., gravity, dreams and beauty). The corollary of this is that wildness cannot be lost, only diminished in nature and in human experience (Birch, 1995). Such suppression is not primarily due to the extermination of the entities that possess it, but the type of relation developed with these entities. Indeed, to take the manifestation of wildness for an entity is a category mistake; we can save the Kakapo but that is not saving wildness. Some commentators, however, such as Shepard (1993), attempt to define wildness in this biological and genetic manner. Arguing that it occurs in any species “whose sexual assortment and genealogy are not controlled by human design” (p.73). Under this attempt at a definition humans are wild, as their genetics are unsorted. Similarly, rats and possums in New Zealand and the South island Kokako are also unsorted, so wild. Their genetics may have been changed by human effects but not by human design. Although, in relation to my analysis, Shepard’s (1993) position may be inadequate, the absence of a controlling relationship is still central to Shepard’s position

Wildness is an important aspect of the other. An other cannot be objectified, defined or analyzed or completely understood if it is to remain other. This means resisting accepting any final identity. The maintenance of otherness requires an openness that allows a spontaneity and an ongoing participation in the emergence of novelty (Birch, 1995). So the ‘essence’ of otherness can be described as wildness. This sort of freedom is required for the dynamics of a complementary and non-conflictive relation with otherness. Functional working identities are of course required, but always need to be considered as incomplete. A hermeneutically based understanding of an ongoing interpretation and reinterpretation that allows pluralism, and a realisation of our immersion prevents identities becoming fixed. Any finalisation of identity involves the absorption of the other into subjectivity and systems (Birch, 1995). An emphasis on resisting any final identity links wildness back to language and a pluralistic openness. For example, the range of (hermeneutic) interpretative symbolic meanings attributed to the Kakapo in part makes up its phenomenological hiddenness. To interpret the Kakapo as just an endangered element of biodiversity requiring management to reproduce more efficiently violates such hiddenness, and therefore its wildness.

3.2.3 Heidegger’s aspects of nature

Figure 3.6

Broad parallels between Heidegger’s aspects of nature and reflexive symbolism

1. Primordial nature - (pre-ontological)		perceptual/poetic
2. Productive nature- (tacit/ontological)	Close-at-hand	perceptual/ethical/poetic
3. Objective nature- (conceptual)	Present-at-hand	ethical

This section briefly relates the foregoing discussion of Heidegger’s understanding of Being to an understanding of nature. This is derived from his deconstruction of Western metaphysics and involves a development of three aspects of nature (Foltz, 1995). Heidegger’s deconstruction, as an actual ‘history of Being’, is set out more fully in Section 3.4. In Figure 3.6 I have drawn some broad parallels between Heidegger’s aspects of nature and the division I have already made between the conceptual, tacit and ontological. The following discussion of Heidegger’s philosophy with regards to nature is aimed at relating, and also developing, the importance of Being in an understanding of nature.

Heidegger argues that entities in their being are not first discovered through a detached gaze as objects set before us, but rather through our concernful dealings with them via practical interaction. This is the ‘productive’ aspect of nature, which Heidegger also calls close-at-hand. It is the overall structure of meaning involved with these concernful dealings that Heidegger calls ‘meaningfulness’ of the ‘world’. For Heidegger, such “meaningfulness is the initial mode of presence” (Foltz, 1995, p.27). For example, the South island Kokako is ‘meaningful’ in its very elusiveness as a physical entity, so it is present within a broader context of a cultural ‘meaningfulness’ through its very absence. Indeed, nature that is ‘discovered’ as objects to be contemplated (objective nature), is for Heidegger “a function of our experience of world” (Foltz, 1995, p. 28). That is, it is a

derivative of the world of our concerned dealings (Foltz, 1995). As such, an understanding that only deals with nature in an objective fashion risks a loss of the fullness of the world, a disruption of being-in-the-world and to its basis in concern. This first type (productive nature) can be related to the tacit aspect of our being-in-the-world, and the latter (objective nature) to the conceptual aspect.

The third type of nature is primordial nature, which can be related to the pre-ontological understanding of *Dasein* (see Section 2.1.3). Notwithstanding the discussion of Being in Section 3.2.1, primordial nature can also be described at a more experiential level through its relation to productive nature. It needs to be made clear that primordial nature is not the 'meaningfulness of the world' (its presence) as expressed through tradition and experience. Rather, its withdrawnness, or 'pre-meaningfulness' and absence embodied in the notions of *phusis* and *aletheia*. Consequently, in our concerned dealings with nature it is withdrawn. As an example, the fisher, or the farmer when dealing with nature in a productive manner they are at ease with it. Only when they are taken away from it does its deeper significance to them become manifest that was not explicitly seen in its usefulness (Foltz, 1995). They, Heidegger suggests, mourn for its loss. This mourning is what Heidegger calls a mood. It is distinct from the sadness involved with the loss of a particular entity, which is an ontic event. Mourning is an ontological event; one that involves a loss of something associated with *Dasein*'s possibilities as a being-in-the-world. Such a loss is associated with angst, where what threatens is the world as such, and not just particular entities in the world. This mourning involves an intensified encounter with what has been lost, whereby it becomes primordially present in its absence. It should be noted that this is not, for Heidegger, just a subjective emotional overlay after the fact of loss, but rather a manifestation of our essential relation to nature (Foltz, 1995).

3.2.4 The ontological poetic (*poiesis*)

Heidegger suggests that loss is not the only way that primordial nature can be encountered. The other, is the sense of nature's emergence into the 'world'. This is humanity's ongoing poetic uncovering of existence as beings-in-the-world and that brings a world into presence. It involves an "intensified disposition that simultaneously discloses both ourselves and entities as co-situated with the world" (Foltz, 1995, p. 50). So, although it is through productive nature that a 'world' can be encountered, it is only in experience and originality that nature can be encountered in its pre-ontological primordially. Such a

disclosure cannot be forced. It is not a purely conceptual occurrence, but perceptual, and so can be related to *poiesis*, intrinsic worth and so to the development of an ethic (see Section 3.1.4). It is both a proactive and passive concerned relation to Being in its continual flow and outpouring (Foltz, 1995). This, I suggest, has three aspects. Being's emergence is manifest in both our embodiment and in language (*logos*). Its appearance can also be attended, according to Heidegger, through meditational thinking (Anderson, 1966).

Consideration of the embodied aspect requires a return to Merleau-Ponty's thought. Indeed, he develops his incarnate philosophy further into a topology of the genesis of Being that he calls an 'ontology of the flesh'. In the earlier discussion of Merleau-Ponty's position (see Section 3.1.3) the subjective intellect was moved into the lived body. In the ontology of the flesh he characterises the lived body as being but a single expression of the entire world. This is a universal dimension of Being prior to the division into particular things. The flesh is an element of Being, and such an element sits midway between the spatio-temporal individual and an 'idea' - "a sort of incarnate principle" (Kearney, 1986, p.89) that produces a 'style' of being. If Being is some universal element that gives meaning (the pre-ontological), the flesh is a 'fragment of being' (the ontological). Being is not something 'beyond' of which we have no knowledge sitting against and behind 'things'. Rather it is here, in the world, and only in the world is it manifest. Because we are enveloped by this universalised Being, it can only be disclosed from the inside (Abram, 1995).

With the emphasis on a 'common flesh', creativity or self-transcendence cannot just be seen as a particular attribute of the human lived body, but a transcendence of a carnal world of which the human body is an internal expression. So the life-space is in transcendence, self-creative and alive. Shifting transcendence from being a purely human attribute to the whole, of which humans are a part, dissolves the gap between humans and other organisms. Human sentience is unique, but other organisms also have their own unique position and language within the flesh of the world (Abram, 1995).

The second aspect of the ontological poetic lies in contemplative thinking. The contemplative is focused on a solitary quest for personal insight. Reaching 'pure experience', a notion that involves bringing perception to the stage of being able to reflect upon Being involves "suspending the constitutive activity of critical reason and standing in mute awe before the wonder of being" (Kohak, 1992, p.182). Heidegger's late philosophy uses this mystical approach. As already discussed, he uses language in a way that is not

referential but evocative, that seeks to make transparent the experience of being, one untamed by concepts. Heidegger sits within a long tradition of attempts to reach 'pure experience', or the 'transcendental experience'. Indeed, descriptions of such attempts "marks the literature of saints and monks of every order East and West" (Dillard, 1974, p. 35).

Heidegger's approach has an ascetic meditational aspect that involves a separation from the worldly. The incessant flow of thoughts is halted in order to get beyond them, so as to transgress the cultural and linguistic meaningful reality. This involves a 'waiting' that is called meditative thinking. Heidegger, in some respects, draws on his earlier position by proposing that an ability for meditative thinking is in human nature. He implies, however, that this 'nature' is derived from a reference beyond the human (Anderson, 1966). As such, meditation is always a 'waiting upon', a gift, rather than a subjective expectation. Consequently, human's true nature comes from that which transcends us, yet such a 'style' of open meditative thinking ('waiting upon') is human. In contrast to what Heidegger calls calculative thinking, meditative thinking does not construct a world of objects, but rather an awareness of the field /horizon in which these objects lie (Anderson, 1966).

Contemplative thinking also has a second aspect that has already been implied. This is to go with the incessant flow of thought, language and culture, in the hope that occasionally glimpses of Being appear (Dillard, 1974). As Karl Jaspers suggests, we only ever get scattered glimpses of that 'background' of our existence from which all emerges, as grace or awe perhaps. Mostly, it just overwhelms us and can only be approached or 'sensed' in the everyday (Wahl, 1965). This brings in Heidegger's emphasis on language. It links in part with Ricoeur's hermeneutics and is the third part of the ontological poetic.

Heidegger proposes that the world becomes present to us through words, it is a gift that brings things to presence. Consequently language is not 'floating free', disconnected from the world, but is vital for the world's very existence for humans. This is an idea of language being 'primordial', as a way in which the world discloses itself through its poetic use (Kearney, 1986). This understanding of language corresponds with it as *logos*, - "the nothing which lets things be...a voice of silence that lies beyond language itself" (Kearney, 1986, p.39). This is poesis, as in a broad sense it is a productive act beholden to something beyond itself (Kearney, 1995). The poetic as language opens a 'world' as a meaningful matrix a space to dwell. Indeed for Heidegger, "the poetic is the basic capacity for human dwelling" (Kearney, 1995, p. xiii).

For Merleau-Ponty too, language is embedded in the enveloping world of immediate experience of which we are part. It is grounded in the perceptual world of the lived body and first expressed as gesture (Abram, 1995). Merleau-Ponty does not see language as Noam Chomsky proposed, a deep structure embedded in human DNA. Rather, he understands language as being in the sensory/perceptual world. In which case it is not just a human attribute (which Chomsky's position does ultimately imply), but is in the world: in the sound of the ocean and rivers, in the setting of the sun, in the flight of the gull. The *logos* is in part realised in humans, but we do not own it. Our language is constructed and maintained by the rhythms, sounds and traces from outside our own species. Language here is neither something to wield over other species, nor as something humans alone have privileged access to (Abram, 1995). This opens an understanding of the relation of language to the landscape, and the risks entailed in the separation of language from landscape.

This obviously has strong links with Heidegger's view on language and his notion of a poetic dwelling on the earth. However, Merleau-Ponty's emphasis is away from Heidegger's position of the *logos* only being manifest through humans; as humans being the historical meditative 'clearance' through which Being exposes itself (Zimmerman, 1992). It is, however, possible that "the language we speak is the voice of the living earth, singing through the human form" (Abram, 1995, p. 58). It is from this latter position, I believe, that it is most useful to propose an 'ethical style'. A fundamentally incarnate one, of living in the earth's horizons with other life, each expressing their own dwelling which finally makes up our own.

In contrast to this primordial conception of language espoused by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, language can also be described as 'fallen'. Fallen language is language that has become abstracted, and internalised within culture. Its relevance is judged by its adequacy to human purposes and its internal coherence which occurs in modern representational thought (Cheney, 1995). While in the mainstream post-modern position, language becomes an internal reflexive play that involves a 'borrowing' and 'collecting' (kitsch) into a cacophony of ideas (see Sections 2.4.2, 2.3.1). Fallen language can become dominant over primordial language, which occurs when it begins to deny its own origins in primordial relationships. There is a double movement involved in this. First, when primordial language is 'exported' it becomes fallen language. This is narrative abstracted from its original context (its original place) and applied elsewhere. If language also

becomes universalised, involving a generalised application that abstraction allows, it becomes a 'totalising' discourse. That "all but about 200 of the modern world's 6,000 languages are likely to be extinct or moribund by the end of next century [21st century]" (Diamond cited in McNeely, 1997, p. 31) points towards Modernism involving both an exportation and a universalisation of language (Cheney, 1995). Both of these tendencies tend to internalise language within culture. Abram (1996) argues that the gradual development of literate based cultures from oral based ones, that began some 2500 years ago in the Mediterranean basin, as being linked to this change.

Totalising language tends to accumulate the world into it, by providing abstract understandings that cut through individual differences. Primordial or contextualised language does the opposite and adapts language to different situations. Here, language becomes a temporal and spatial mosaic (local), reflecting people's experiences of living in various times and environments (Cheney, 1995). It is this primordial aspect of language and its association with living partly outside the human constructed world, which provides grounding for a *reflexive symbolism*. I suggest that changing narratives (and traditions) to more ecologically sustainable ones involves reintegrating language, via the poetic and interaction, and bringing to the forefront its primordial aspect as bioregional narratives.

3.3 Nature and science

3.3.1 Being as pure presence

As has been set out, for Heidegger, Being is always elusive. This plays on the core phenomenological theme of presence and absence. It involves 'waiting', as Being is given and not merely demanded or extracted. It is such an openness that Heidegger calls dwelling. As was discussed in the previous section, this involves our embodiment and language. Heidegger argues that the realisation of this occlusion or withdrawal is itself obscured by metaphysics (Foltz, 1995) and consequently, as is highlighted in this section, can become dominated by other types of interactions with the world (Steiner, 1978). This involves the critical side of his deconstruction of Western metaphysics, one that highlights the limitations of nature as an object; nature as present-at-hand.

In the foregoing development of Being (see Section 3.2.1), Being is not addressed directly but is understood as an active presence. It is an event that is under laid by absence and that requires our involvement with entities. However, Heidegger suggests that it is an emphasis on the being of entities that risks subverting the question of Being itself. Metaphysics becomes the investigation of the being of entities; of *what* they are and *that* they are (Foltz, 1995). Here the chief characteristic of entities is their very presence, and Being itself becomes “discerned as constant presence through its subordination to entities” (Foltz, 1995, p.69). So the question of Being is lost in two ways. First, because of Being’s subservience to entities in their presence, and our ever increasing understanding of the form and interaction of entities, it is thought that Being must be “sufficiently clarified” (Foltz, 1995, p. 69). Second, in this clarification of entities that Being is made to account for, Being is made subservient to humans as both discoverers and valuers, and this itself is not made explicit.

It needs to be made clear that the presence of entities is not merely a physical presence. Indeed, it is the conceptual idea as pure presence, that Heidegger argues, is the feature of metaphysics. It is in Plato’s thought that this metaphysics matures and then becomes central to much subsequent Western philosophy (Foltz, 1995). For Plato “the being of an entity lies in the invisible “looks” (*eidos*)” (Foltz, 1995, p 70). These invisible looks or ideas are what grant the visible entity its “constancy, identity and intelligibility” (Foltz, 1995, p. 70). So the individual existents that are Kakapo are merely imperfect instances of the ‘idea’ of Kakapo in which their real being as entities reside. Here it is the idea that occurs first and makes what appears accessible.

Foltz (1995) suggests that there are traces of self-emergence (*phusis*) and unconcealing (*alethia*) in Plato’s position. The ‘idea’ can be interpreted as the moment of abiding in self-emergence and as a type of unconcealment. However, there is also a significant shift, as the event character and interplay of presence and absence of *phusis/alethia* is concealed through their stabilizing in the idea. Most significantly, the locus of truth is shifted from the unconcealment of things to the correctness of the ‘look’ by the apprehender. This leads first, to the subordination of Being to the knowing subject, and second, to the beforehand character of the idea as an *a priori*. This is more fully developed in Kant’s philosophy and acts as a footing for the mathematical character of modern science. Third, it also lays the foundation for the medieval subordination of nature as creation (Foltz, 1995).

In the middle ages Being becomes the actual that is sustained by God, not a self-showing. So entities do not have possibility (absence) in themselves but only an actuality given by God. Along with this the Greek notion of *Hupokeimenon* is reinterpreted as the Latin *subjectum*. *Hupokeimenon* is related to *Logos*, as a 'saying' that involves a gathering together of things into a coherent presence. This is not to be understood as something arbitrary, just on the side of the speaker, but an interaction or relation that is constrained by the nature of the things involved in the interaction. For Heidegger, the 'saying' in *logos* is the poetic use of language produced in interaction with Being. This should not be thought of as a polarity, as in an interaction of subject and object, rather it is an interaction of mutual giving. Thus the distinction between *Hupokeimenon* and *subjectum* is that the saying in *Hupokeimenon* comes from "that which lies present of own accord" (Foltz, 1995, p.73), while in *Subjectum* the focus is on "the very lying present itself" (Foltz, 1995 p.73), that is given by God and gathered by the subject. So the emphasis in the latter is first on that which 'supports things' - the act of creation - and, second, on the later addition of coherency by the subject (Foltz, 1995).

In summary, the sense of being whereby entities emerge into presence of their own accord (*phusis*) succumbs to one where entities are given and sustained by the agency God. Here God is a radically transcendent, prior and underlying ultimate ground. So the manner of questioning and thinking is orientated in advance by this principle (Foltz, 1995). This has parallels with Kuhn's (1962) notion of normal science, where a prior framework orientates questioning and thinking. However, the former has a much broader orientation that is towards an 'epoch of understanding' and that encapsulates science as a whole, rather than Kuhn's (1962) concern with paradigms within science.

The emphasis on external causes, according to Heidegger, denatures nature by removing any potentiality from nature itself. This metaphysics of the middle ages prepares the way for modern science through the very notion that nature is meaningful and intelligible only with reference to a prior ground, in the latter case, a mathematical ground. This is linked to Descartes' philosophy in which certainty comes initially from human self-certainty. Here, the subject is the unshakable and absolute ground of truth so entities become objects for the subject; entities become productions of the mind. As such they can best be explained, and consequently fixed, as constantly present to subjectivity and mathematically calculable. Here, presence becomes pre-organised by reason (Foltz, 1995).

Descartes' position is a confrontation, where the subject has to 'figure out' what things are, as they are never what they seem (Foltz, 1995). It is a search for the 'actual' that involves the attempt to contemplate just the object itself apart from subjective longings and desires. In doing this it both deprives nature of its own standing and overrides how it is given to experience. A human Being, for example, is divined and known scientifically as a set of interrelated biological and psychological systems rather than as the much fuller notion of a person. This approach is encapsulated in Descartes' infamous one liner "I think, therefore I am", that is a mastering of experience where the conceptual dominates the perceptual. Thus Descartes' philosophy reflects the prevailing dichotomy of being and thinking, where Being is not thought about but taken for granted. In taking up this 'epochal disposure of Being', science serves as the dominant way in which entities may be understood and present to us. Nature becomes a realm of objects that is understood in its mathematical characteristics as standing counter to consciousness in an adversarial relation (Foltz, 1995).

Science sets up how nature is to be known by revealing it through a predefined mathematical model. This forces nature to reveal itself as components (objects) in a causal molecular network (Foltz, 1995). Scientists must know numbers as an 'idea' before they can count things. This is a net that is 'cast out' over nature by science that involves, methods, quantitative analysis, in short, 'proofs' to which aspects of nature must conform before they can be considered as an actuality (Foltz, 1995). For example, the search for the South island Kokako is based upon obtaining 'unequivocal evidence'. To 'officially exist' the South island Kokako must be recorded on video and so its existence verified within certain criteria. The descriptions of first hand human encounters and also tape recordings of their calls are not enough. This is not to deny that science is *a way* of revealing nature with its own truth, but it cannot invoke the 'fullness of nature'. Indeed, according to Heidegger science acts to conceal "the fullness of the coming to presence of nature" (Foltz, 1995, p. 79).

This move towards 'constant presence' of nature as an object reaches its ultimate point in modern technology, where everything becomes objectified as a resource, even the human subject. In technology the interaction with an entity's original form is reduced to the extent that the creative human response that allows entities to 'emerge' is oppressed. This occurs, for example, in factory production and intensive agricultural practices. Here the thing or the land is dominated and controlled in order to produce a predefined outcome

that is dominated by productive requirements. In this 'challenging forth', or 'provocation', as Heidegger describes it, things are treated as resources that are always 'present' and available to be manipulated for human use. They retain none of their own standing or autonomy (Foltz, 1995). Technology is not to be understood as a means to an end, but rather more fundamentally, as a way of disclosing things through delineating their being and how they are to be encountered (Foltz, 1995).

3.3.2 Post-positivist science

Further questions about the objective validity of empirical evidence occurred in the 20th century, from within natural science itself. Pivotal to this was Heisenberg's (1901-76) development of the 'uncertainty principle'. This suggested the future position and momentum of sub-atomic particles cannot both be predicted. This is partly due to the effects the observer has on the observed particles (Hawking, 1988). In addition, Niels Bohr's (1885-1962) work suggested that these particles are of a form that could not be described with current concepts or language, that is, that they are ontologically different from other objects (Crotty, 1998). These developments suggest, first, that scientists, in the act of observing, affect what they are observing. Second, scientists are actively constructing scientific knowledge within the limitations of current conceptions of reality, rather than discovering the given laws of nature (Crotty, 1998).

This latter point was developed further by Karl Popper (1902-1994), who suggested that science is not a matter of revealing the laws inherent in nature itself but is instead a continual process of conjecture and falsification. This was based on Popper's questioning of the inductive method of empirical science (Outhwaite, 1987). The inductive approach focuses on seeking causal explanations through the development of theories. These theories are developed through the accumulation of various instances of empirical events. They are in turn elaborated and generalised as covering laws from which further explanations are developed (Crotty, 1998). Such an approach assumes that such empirical instances will remain unchanged in the future. However, there is no empirical justification for this, rather it is a logical assumption. This undermines the empirical basis of the scientific method (Outhwaite, 1987).

What Popper suggests instead is that the scientific method should be based on searching for anomalies. Popper saw 'falsification' as the rationale for testing the hypotheses of science. This is achieved by using a hypothetical-deductive method, where

present theories are used and an attempt is made to disprove them. The ability to falsify theories, according to Popper, is what sets science apart from pseudo-science (Crotty, 1998). This undermines the notion of the 'discovery' of laws; rather science consists of an ongoing development of theories. Here laws and theories are never considered final as they are always potentially empirically refutable (Crotty, 1998). This involves a change in emphasis from probabilities to possibilities. In other words, from assuming things will continue the same way to that they may well not.

Regardless of the foregoing critique, some commentators (Outhwaite, 1987; Crotty, 1998) suggest that the inductive formulation and testing of universal laws continues to be the main form of scientific method, within which scientists generally focus on verification rather than falsification (Outhwaite, 1987). Indeed, Thomas Kuhn's (1922-96) work on the development of science suggests that even when faced with conflicting evidence scientists tend to continue using established theories. Kuhn takes a historical and social approach to scientific practice based on past radical changes that have occurred in scientific conceptions of 'reality'. He suggests they have not developed directly from each other, but instead have involved revolutionary change. The background of theory (paradigm) within which scientists conduct their work, Kuhn called 'normal science'. The prevailing paradigm legitimates scientists' work, and is 'taken-for-granted'. It establishes parameters and boundaries for how science is carried out, and suppresses anomalies. However, at times anomalies build up to the extent that they are unable to be ignored by the established paradigm, forcing a revolutionary re-conceptualisation. This includes philosophical debate over fundamentals. For example, Darwin's theory of evolution based on natural selection displaced theories of a world governed by design (Crotty, 1998). Some disciplines may not fit into this model of development, indeed a characteristic of the social sciences throughout much of the 20th century has been one of largely irreconcilable, multiple, and competing paradigms (Therborn, 1994).

Kuhn links the development of these revolutions to the social and political needs of the society that the scientific community and the individual scientists exist within. In linking scientific endeavour to the social world Kuhn highlights that any change occurring within it, like any other human activity, is more likely to be chaotic than orderly (Kuhn, 1962). Paul Feyerabend (1924-94) highlights this aspect, suggesting that such an anarchic character is necessary for the advancement of scientific knowledge. Chaos and opportunism are the most important functions of scientific theorising. This however, is

suppressed through educational indoctrination into normal science. Under this premise science should be encouraging the development of alternative theories (counter-induction), for example, from religion, mythology, and other cultures. These counter understandings act as measuring sticks as Feyerabend proposes that we cannot judge the validity of something from the inside (Crotty, 1998). The problems related to 'getting outside', as have been discussed, are related to social and experiential pluralism.

Popper, Kuhn, and Feyerabend question the tenets of objective knowledge as being ahistorical, value-neutral and cross-cultural. Crotty (1998) argues that even though most scientists accept this humbler version of science they still see scientific knowledge as more certain than other forms of knowledge. The major concern here is the status of such knowledge, as for Crotty (1998) it is completely valid to articulate scientific knowledge, but not to claim it as the only valid knowledge. As has been discussed, phenomenological critiques the problem from a different angle. Husserl (Kearney, 1986) suggests that scientific knowledge is an abstraction from the lived world; that it is knowledge that is derivative from the world of our everyday experiences. This is of course not to deny the usefulness of such abstractions. For Heidegger, the concern is the ability of scientific understandings to obscure the basic nature of our relations to the world (Kearney, 1986).

3.3.3 Ecology and open systems

Much of the foregoing has involved a reductionist mechanistic model of science. Ecology, which is the natural science discipline that is relevant to this research, is a science that has been at the forefront of a turn to a more organic model of science. However, as has been implied in the preceding section, this is a complex situation. Consequently, the extent of this shift is still in dispute and some commentators such as Kidner (1998) suggest a mechanistic view is still dominant in the biological sciences, including ecology. In this section I will outline an open systems holistic model of ecology that complements hermeneutics and phenomenology, and which Norton (1992) suggests is a 'new paradigm'. This in itself suggests a more mechanistic understanding may still dominate.

The mechanistic understanding involves attempting to explain reality through the investigation of parts. This emphasizes analysis by abstraction and considers individuals as independent by detaching them from their full relational context. What relations there are between objects are reduced, whenever possible, to physical forces, and such causally based interactions among them are treated deterministically (Norton, 1992). This 'hard'

ecological approach, according to Schrader-Frechette (2001), produces empirically underdetermined theories. In other words, such theories are unable to consistently predict empirical outcomes when applied to a wide range of situations. This is due to the complexity involved in understanding the interrelations of the biotic and abiotic worlds.

By contrast, the organicist position places the emphasis on wholes. However, the classic approach to this tended towards a teleological position. The teleological approach requires a top down causation of an intentional agency. This involves a metaphysical assertion that things are developing to a prior plan. Some proponents take this position literally; others only as a guiding metaphor (Norton, 1992). The major problem of a holistic approach, teleological or otherwise, lies at what level to place the whole. The Gaia hypothesis, which places the biosphere as the whole, produces a reductionist shift that posits 'independence' at a certain level (Norton, 1992). Here the biosphere is 'closed off', as a closed system, from extra-terrestrial systems as a governing whole, while also being governing to its terrestrial subsystems.

An influential stream of the holistic approach is one that supports ecosystems as wholes (Hettinger & Throop, 1999). This has been criticised in the way it has been used to characterise the essential features of ecosystems as involving stability, integrity and diversity. This traditional approach, one that has been used to underwrite an ecocentric environmental ethic, has been questioned in recent times (Hettinger & Throop, 1999). These characterising terms are used in a variety of ways, however, in general, "A [eco]system is stable (1) if it is relatively constant over time, (2) if it resists alteration (i.e., it is not fragile), (3) if upon being disturbed it has a strong tendency to return to its pre-disturbance state (i.e., it is resilient), or (4) if it moves toward some end point ('matures'), despite differences in starting points ('trajectory stability')" (Hettinger & Throop, 1999, p.5). 'Integrity', is the notion that elements of an ecosystem are integrated into a unified whole. Within this approach ecosystems do undergo some change, such as population fluctuations, but usually these changes involve regular patterns. Disturbances are unusual and ecosystems tend to resist their disruption and return to the pre-disturbance state or trajectory. A loss of a species, such as the Kakapo, upsets the ecosystem's stability and integrity and diversity and so is considered damaging. As such this model acts as a basis for judging whether ecosystems have been damaged; whether they have lost some of their 'intrinsic value'. Because nature reaches these states without human interaction an environmental ethic based on this model supports minimizing interaction and disturbance

so to preserve 'intact' ecosystems (Hettinger & Throop, 1999). The positing of stability, integrity and diversity at the ecosystem level places it in a governing role to its constituent parts.

Schrader-Frechette (2001) argues that there is no broad evidence that ecosystems tend towards homeostasis, balance or stability. In connection with this there has been no universalised ecological theory developed to express this condition. Indeed, there is no universal level at which some balance or whole exists. So the choice of ecosystem as the level at which stability, integrity or balance ought to be maximised in management is again questionable. Indeed, while a conclusion of stability may be valid for one species or temporal/spatial scale may not be valid for another species or scale. Another level could be chosen, such as communities, or collections of ecosystems (Schrader-Frechette, 2001). In parallel to this there is reduced support for the diversity-stability view. Empirical studies have shown that some simple ecosystems are very stable and some complex ones unstable (Schrader-Frechette, 2001). Indeed, there is some evidence that an intermediate level of diversity is most stable (Hettinger & Throop, 1999).

These concerns involve a move towards an ecology of instability. Some proponents of this approach suggest that disturbance is the norm for many natural systems. This is due to a myriad of influences on natural systems at a whole range of scales that means in the long term they remain in flux. If instability is understood to exist at a number of levels and scales the notion that ecosystems exist as well integrated and persisting wholes is difficult to justify (Hettinger & Throop, 1999). In addition, the idea that species groupings (as an integrated ecosystem) come and go together is questioned (Jablonski, 1991 cited in Hettinger & Throop, 1999). Instead, different species respond differently to environmental change and gradients so species mix is spatially and temporally contingent. As such ecosystems are not 'supposed' to include certain species (Hettinger & Throop, 1999), and it cannot be said that exotic species, such as humans or rats, do not belong in New Zealand ecosystems.

The ecology of instability is a shift in emphasis towards the important features of natural systems consisting of such things as, complexity, creativity, beauty, fecundity and wildness. This is not to suggest, however, that natural systems do not show any integrity or stability at certain scales and respects. Rather it questions the promotion of an ethic centred purely on ecosystem stability, integrity, etc. (Hettinger & Throop, 1999). An understanding of the natural world that involves a combination of stability and instability can be

developed through open systems (Capra, 1996). Such an approach is compatible with the *reflexive symbolic* phenomenological and hermeneutic position set out in these theory chapters.

Open systems maintain their function through continuous interaction and exchange of information and energy with their environments. Their environment is made up of both super and sub systems. Open systems thinking provides a framework for analysis where the information passed across levels of a system is not deterministic but involves probabilities. System theory is hierarchical and open-ended and systems are considered self-organising and self-regulating (Capra, 1996). This open and dynamic understanding of systems avoids postulating reified wholes such as ecosystems (Norton, 1992). In parallel with a mode of understanding invoked by the hermeneutic circle, open systems involve both analyzable parts and intuited wholes that are in continuous interaction and consequential change. They can be related to the hermeneutic notions of explanation and understanding already discussed in Section 2.2.2.

In open systems both atomism and holism are true within certain bounds. As such they provide useful approximations to truth considered from one scale of the system. This also implies that processes in nature can be studied from different perspectives and scales, and that the natural world is fundamentally complex. Delineating scales involves the recognition of pervious membranes, rather than distinct wholes, which allow provisional distinctions to be made between systems and subsystems (Norton, 1992). Such distinctions can be considered as identities. Choices, with regard to perspectives and scales, become choices about what interpretation one is making within the limits of one's facticity.

Norton (1992) breaks up the problems of scale into three categories. The first, as has been discussed above, involves boundary issues. This relates to the management of systems requiring the defining boundaries. Due to an ability to interpret natural systems in multiple ways, this position gives no clear indication of upon what level or scale analysis should be centered for system management (i.e., where system membranes or boundaries lie). The second is the temporal perspective. Management of a system assumes it retains its identity through time. But biological systems are in dynamic change and in many ways embrace multiple frames of time (e.g., day to day weather, climate, population fluctuations, and geological time scales) (Norton, 1992).

This temporal problem of scale can be highlighted with regards to endangered species management and extinction rates. Raup (1991) suggests 99.9 % of all species that

have existed on this planet are now extinct. This loss has occurred through either a slow, relatively continuous replacement of species by natural selection, known as background extinction, or through mass extinction events. These are considered to happen when a loss greater than 5% of total species occurs over a geologically short space of time (Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996). In background extinction, species die out all together or they evolve into different species (pseudo extinction). This process is thought to account for about 40% of total extinctions throughout history. Mass extinction events have associations with punctuated evolution theories. This is because they leave niches to be filled, hence rapid speciation following these events. The exact causes of these events are still in dispute, but the large reductions in biodiversity involved have always been recovered over long time scales. Indeed, they are even possibly a significant force behind the trend towards increasing complexity (of organisms) in evolution (Raup, 1991).

It is generally agreed that, through the influence of humans, the rate of extinction is currently elevated above the background rate on a global scale. Effectively, humans change the environment much faster than natural processes; consequently, requirements for adaptation are much greater than many species are able to maintain. 'Natural' mass extinction events are an exception to this (Cherfas, 1985). The exact extent and rate of the current human induced mass extinction event is still in dispute. This is largely because the number of species on the planet is unknown and the methods used to estimate extinction rates are questionable (Elliott, 1985). Estimates of the total number of species vary from 10 to 100 million. Stork (1999), from an overview of a wide range of sources, suggests a working figure of 13.4 million. This highlights the complexity of open systems and lack of knowledge about them (Curtis & Barnes, 1989), and also that extinctions, or even mass extinctions, are 'normal' events and so in longer temporal scales there may be no biodiversity crises.

The third problem of scale is related to the above. It is the scale and degree of human impact. Open systems, although dynamic, display some equilibrium points that in turn allow some planning and purposeful action. This also means that human impacts of a limited scale may not exceed the systems assimilative capacity and are damped out, or equilibrated. The extent that this can occur depends upon the scale of the human activity relative to the system (Norton, 1992). The difficulty is deciding how far human effects go before affecting these equilibrium points, and what risks are acceptable (Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996).

These scale problems highlight the difficulty of the management of nature if it is conceptualised as an open system. Norton (1992, p. 34) suggests to this end that it is “seldom clear whether managers should be protecting features that are familiar to our culture, ecological features that support certain essential services, or long standing features that provide the geological context for ecological processes”. The problem involves the development of a method of understanding that is encompassing enough to guide policy (praxis), but recognises the role of creativity and innovation within open systems of which humans themselves are a part. In the development of this method of understanding, I suggest the need to consider the role of the ‘non-rational’, experience and the poetic. As has been discussed, these aspects of our existence emphasise, and attempt to address, our immersion in the world, and such immersion parallels the understanding of human participation open systems. In support of this Schrader-Frechette (2001) argues for a practical ecology, that avoids both reified accounts of ecosystems and excessive reductionism. Rather she supports an ecology based on interaction and local knowledge involving case studies, that then allows judgments to be made about management actions.

3.4 Theory summary and conclusion

3.4.1 A fitting response

The foregoing discussion has involved a de-centering of the subjective valuer as an ethical starting point. With such an approach a theory of value is rendered superfluous as here ethics is understood as a way of being-in-the-world with others which preempts the ability to develop a subjectively based theory of value. Indeed, to allocate value to something is finally to rob it of its worth, as such a position suggests that a thing’s Being is exhausted by it being an ‘object’ of human valuation (Heidegger cited in Schrag, 1986). For example, the lostness of the South island Kokako suggests a more expansive realm of value. The South island Kokako has a ‘realness’ in its very lostness (absence), suggesting that its value is not necessarily first and foremost in entities present for inspection. Just interpreting value in such a manner hides a more fundamental and complex sense. Indeed, when things are depicted as factual objects, to which subsequently, subjective values are thought to be appended, feeling, insights and intuition tend to be translated into terms

which are either rational or emotional, rather than being expressed in mythical, spiritual or ritual form (Kidner, 1998) (see Section 3.1.2).

Heidegger exposes further opposition to the notion of the rational subject as an ethical starting point when he suggests that “any kind of polemics fails from the outset to assume the attitude of thinking” (cited in Kohak, 1992, p. 183). Here Heidegger is proposing that the contemplation of truth, and so the good and right, involves a suspension of critical reason. However, with the suspension of critical reason is the loss of the ability to make discriminatory differential judgments. Consequently, waiting for a disposure of Being is critiqued as quietism; as a poetic impotence, when environmental problems require practical actions (Kluback & Wilde, 1956). The counter to this is that conceptually based utilitarian categories “degenerate into self-binding human hubris when they are not grounded in a sense of wonder and intrinsic worth of being” (Kohak, 1992, p. 183). Without a sense of wonder and sacredness there is no limit to utilitarian claims. Kluback and Wilde (1956), in critiquing Heidegger for failing to consider practical existence fully enough, propose that human’s social, political and economic experiences determine and reveal the ontological nature of their existence. In other words they are not in any way separate. Indeed, acts can be understood to produce value (Jonas cited Kohak, 1992). Both are needed; the ontic to “guarantee the structures of concrete existence against their possible self-destruction” (Kluback & Wilde, 1956, p.17) and the ontological to establish the limits of the descriptive dimensions of Being.

Thus ethics requires a perspective of utility and also a matrix in which to place it. Religion once provided such a matrix, however, in our present secular Western culture this matrix, to use Heidegger’s terminology, has been ‘covered over’. There are three parts to this covering over. The first, Kohak (1992) suggests, is that as our perceptual lifeworld becomes more dominated by human artifacts that are mostly of a utilitarian nature that humans are conceived as the source of all value; that reality is a reality ‘for us’. Second, as has been discussed, an over emphasis on language can also lead to language being seen as a cultural play that is disconnected from the non-human world of ‘other’ entities and Being. Third, if the conceptual is emphasised too much the recognition of our perceptual immersion is lost (Kidner, 1998).

One approach to rectifying this, is the development of a ‘better conceptualisation’ that re-mythologises the world. Fawcett (2000) describes this as taking epistemic responsibility for how we know the world. This could well be a useful approach. However,

the discussion so far has highlighted the difficulty of being clear about the role of language, perception and reflexivity. This in turn places limits on such a conceptual course. As such, it is not a matter of developing a more adequate conception of reality, but rather, an ongoing perceptual contact with the other in order to come to perceive it differently (Kohak, 1992).

This approach can be conveyed through Heidegger's notion of dwelling. This is 'being attendant to things' not just considering things as objects that are merely present and useful. Rather it is 'letting things be', which involves concern or care. This is not just a psychologically based 'attitude' towards things, but a disposition of living that grants things leeway to disclose themselves. In this there is a need to establish an 'other', that in turn requires a recognition of self that comes out of tradition. This is because an ethic involves making decisions concerning the other. In order to achieve this a reflexively based categorising of things is required. This categorising of the not-self (other) in turn depends upon how it is constituted. I have supported the constitution of an other that cannot be fully revealed due to our own immersion and its hiddenness. In this combination of immersion and hiddenness the other becomes the 'source' of polysemic surplus and the poetic. In addition, it also demands respect in its mystery and absence (intrinsic worth). Thus, a categorisation always takes place within a matrix that emphasises a respect for the other's contingent identity. Such an understanding involves incorporating the perceptual and conceptual in a *reflexive symbolism*. Ethical responses which come out of this understanding I will characterise as a 'fitting response'. To encapsulate this, a fitting response to the other can be thought to flow from a contextual holism, expressed by individuals as incarnate beings in a symbolically mediated existence within the openness of the giving of Being.

In addition to reflexivity's role in categorisation it also has a role in critiquing the tradition that is bound up in symbolic mediation. In other words, understanding should not just be subservient to a tradition's ideological and metaphysical claims. However, as is shown by Ricoeur, we are not able to fully transcend them; tradition always sits as a background. So here Ricoeur's understanding becomes vital. What may have been in the pre-modern *episteme* a 'given' *ethos*, now becomes a task of reflexively negotiating the mediating structures that block the path back into a pure symbolic understanding of the world. However, there are limits to this, because as consciousness itself delves into the

unconscious, symbolic and mythological it unsettles the possibility of a pure relational understanding.

As is implied above, this critique of tradition (ideologies/metaphysics) also involves an ontological aspect that allows the surplus via individual experience for distantation. In a physical sense this involves being sensitive to that which could be described as ‘wildness’, a ‘letting be’ that allows other life to express its place in the world. For Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger the ontological reality resides in the natural. As such, a fitting response always involves both the ontologically based ‘dwelling’ of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur’s practical hermeneutic socio/political/economic concerns embedded in the metaphysics of tradition.

Throughout this discussion language has always been of central concern. This is because Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur all propose, with varying emphasis, an intimate and reciprocal connection between language and the world. Consequently, language that is purely internalised within culture becomes separated from its ‘source’, disallowing an ethical relation with the environment. This also places a stress on the importance of a cultural connection with the wild non-human world, and for its expression in language that develops in the unique experiences of each place. These then become stories about ourselves, who we are and how to act. So they become our guides for decision making at an individual and collective level. The interplay between self and other, separation and relation involved here cannot be patterned in literal language, which implicitly denies the interplay’s possibility. It requires the development of language that is symbolic, open and ambiguous to allow its operation. Kidner (1998) argues that social structures that allow such development are lacking in modern world, that there is a need for cultural forms, such as *ritual*, stories and myths that highlight the relational.

3.4.2 Restoration as ritual

Finally, I will relate the foregoing theoretical understanding more directly to endangered species management through a brief discussion of restoration and ritual. The fitting response of the individual can be understood to be carried in tradition, as ritual. Ritual, according to Jordon (1997), is vital to negotiating a relationship between human communities and the larger, non-human community. In symbolically based archaic cultures the experience and ritual value of an act was often taken as being of primary importance. Consequently, these cultures devoted a large proportion of resources to activities that have

little or no effect on the physical world or landscape, rather they effect the community's idea of the landscape and its place in it (Jordon, 1997). In short, ritual both confirms and has the ability to change the 'world'. Such a change cannot be accessed through the conceptual, because ritual acts attempt to address the immersion that we can never be conceptually clear about. As such, in parallel with myth making, ritual cannot be organised to occur, only facilitated. In a *reflexive symbolic* culture such facilitation involves a reflexive recognition of our immersion.

Further to this, Shepard (1993) proposes that ritual can best be understood if time is not considered mechanically derived or historical but an 'event time'. His is an emphasis on place and the events and moments that occur as chance in embodied experience. Place becomes both internal and external where language comes from outside as much as inside. Chance highlights the mystery of Being and human participation in it. So humans are not seen as rulers of other entities but as being in participation with, and respect of, their autonomy, or wildness. For Shepard (1993), individual experience is bound to a culture that fosters its development and, following Merleau-Ponty, one that highlights a sensuous apprehension where experience and ideas interact in the perceptual, and so into a perceptual style. His position involves a recollection of aspects of a primitive understanding. In doing this, Shepard (1993) is proposing a hermeneutic critical recollection of our human tradition, and so a projection of an open sustainable future in a recognition of our embodied existence.

Shepard's (1993) position lies in the recognition that we are no longer a symbolic culture but one with a *reflexive symbolic* understanding. Consequently, practices will now always be a combination of reflexively based practical acts, as opposed to a pure ritually based praxis. Here ritual can be understood as both a guide for and an outcome of praxis. In ecological restoration these two aspects have a circular relation, where interactive practical acts are the source of the poetic and as such they also act as a guide for praxis. So ecological restoration has both a ritual aspect and a reflexive one. However, too much emphasis on the reflexive side means that some restoration may be ecologically and technically effective, within bounds of scale and knowledge, but fail to bring about changes in community and so not succeed in the long term (Jordon, 1997). In short, what is essential to ritualised restoration is respect for the other, because this acts as a guide to physical acts of care and for creativity in culture. (see Sections 3.1.4, 3.2.4).

Consequently, we should not 'fix' or control nature to meet cultural understandings without being open, through experiential interaction, to allow it to change such understandings. As such, the methodology used for this thesis can be understood as being ritually based. This is because it comes out of a consideration of praxis, but also attempts to address and enhance an understanding of the praxis of endangered species management in relation to our being-in-the-world. To this end, endangered species management has the potential to develop into a ritually based activity. This is because, although it is primarily a practical ends orientated practice, it involves first hand experiential (perceptual) interaction with the non-human world. In addition these restorative practices are manifest within a tradition as acts of care.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

One of my concerns in this study is that my analysis may be inadequate, in that it may involve a misinterpretation and consequently a misrepresentation of my informants. This is associated with my ability to incorporate the complexity and depth of their understandings in my discussion and a tension between my experience of my informant's lives, the places they live, and my analysis. This is due to my inability to be able to be fully them. Rather, I am attempting to interpret their understandings through developing a partial sharing of their meanings. This is an epistemological approach that attempts to know their world. In order to help address this I am also approaching this research ontologically.

This works at two levels. First, through living and working with my informants I in part take on their way of being-in-the-world. This is not just reflexive development of shared meanings, but an immersive aspect. It needs to be noted that this immersion did not substantively occur during the actual fieldwork involved in this research, as I only spent three weeks with my informants. Rather, it occurred through long term episodes of living and working in similar places in the past. Second, through paying attention to their practices.

This ontological aspect reflects Gadamer's hermeneutic concerns. This comprises the understanding involved with our participation in cultural tradition that is prior to any systematic hermeneutic investigation of the tradition itself. In his critique of the social sciences, he suggests that they do not aim at 'understanding' in this participatory sense, but rather involve an attempt to "incorporate linguistically sedimented truisms" (Outhwaite, 1986, p.64). Gadamer is not offering a different methodology for the social sciences, but is concerned with the processes that underlie interpretative methods. These processes involve the centralness of encounter and engagement with objects, rather than just a reflexive self-consciousness (Crotty, 1998). This highlights the notion that the reflexive self-consciousness of social sciences differs from an ontological understanding (Outhwaite, 1986).

Consequently, hermeneutics suggests that interpretative sociology, as generally practiced, needs to broaden its conception of meaning. Symbolic interactionism, for example, stresses the actors' definitions of the situation and tends to reduce social life to socialisation, role-taking, etc. (Crotty, 1998). Symbolic interactionists confine themselves to subjective meanings that are supposed to be in the actors' heads, rather than a more 'public' notion of mind and thinking. This is at the expense of more general underlying structures of meaning (i.e., existential and tradition). By contrast, phenomenology has an objective aspect, in that it is searching for the objects of experience rather than just the contents of the experiencing subject (Crotty, 1998).

By taking up these concerns there are three aspects to be addressed in this chapter. The first involves how, as an investigator, I access the subjective understandings of my informants. This involves a reflexive approach of attempting to put myself in the place of the informants. This is in order to develop a shared understanding of their world. This is engaged via symbolic interactionism, where our reflexivity allows me to attempt to take on the role of the other and engage in meaning making action through interaction. This involves close attention to gestures and talk. The second aspect of this investigatory approach, due to phenomenology's emphasis on the social facets (see Section 2.1.2) of subjectivity, involves an investigation of the informants' 'taken-for-granted' social actions. I will address this using Shultz's phenomenological method of typification.

The third aspect of the investigatory approach involves ontological concerns, where I as an investigator, through interacting and living with my informants am 'affected' by them and take up aspects of their being-in-the-world (Jurich, 2000). The informants' gestures and talk as practices are not just reflexive acts but part of being-in-the-world, and in my investigations as a researcher this needs to be recognised. However, I can never fully reveal this aspect of the investigation, as I cannot finally reveal my informants', or my own, immersion.

Analysis emerges from all three of these facets; the subjective values of my informants, the closely impinging social narratives and their ontological concerns. Together they constitute a *reflexive symbolic* understanding of the social world that reflects my theoretical development (see Figure 4.1). I suggest that integrating these three aspects of the phenomena of endangered species management allows the development of a broader understanding of the 'meaning' of these practices.

Tracing the extent to which my informant’s practices can be considered as ritually based involves, in particular, consideration of the stories and acts that make up their conservation practices. This comprises searching for talk and actions that can be considered narratives involving the synthesis and expression of perception and conception; being-in-the-world and reflexivity. The narratives that are concerned with our immersion lie along side other narratives (e.g., nature as an object etc.). They are in part reflexively recognised and in part taken-for-granted. These concerns are exposed in the Results chapter’s meta-themes. These themes are concerned with the role of stories and of my informant’s being-in-the-world (see Figure 5.1).

Because of my study’s particular approach its methodology can be considered as having a basis in ritual. This can be recognised, first, through my recognition of the conceptual intangibility of the issue, and an associated emphasis away from purely practical ends. Second, through highlighting the importance of wildness and experience and attempting to trace the significance of these in my informant’s understandings. Third, is that my approach revolves around attempting to contribute, in some small way, to an understanding of New Zealander’s relations with the New Zealand landscape. This is in turn, to promote an enhancement our understanding of the landscape, and therefore of ourselves.

A final concern involves with how to analyse and categorise these understandings. For this I will used a grounded theory approach.

Figure 4.1
The three investigatory aspects of my methodology.

<i>Methodologies</i>	<i>Their correlation with reflexive symbolism</i>
1. Symbolic Interactionism	Reflexive (analysed actions)
2. Typication (Schultz)	Tacit (taken-for-granted)
3. Ontological (Heidegger)	Ontological (taken-for-granted)

4.1 The social 'taken-for-granted'

Schultz (cited in Johnston, 1986) suggests there is a divergence between the circumstances of the production of text (or any cultural product) and the meanings sustained by it in the world. This is a difference between intention and interpretation and involves three layers: First, between what we say and what we intend; second, between what is said and others interpretation of it; and third, between the intention and the 'objective' outcome it produces (Johnston, 1986). This produces a surplus of intersubjective interpretation over subjective intentions (see Sections 2.2.2, 2.2.4). Hermeneutics suggests that this can be overcome because it suggests the possibility of a partial fusion of the horizons of understanding of the interpreter with the object of study (see Section 2.2.2)(Outhwaite, 1986). However, because of this challenge Schultz argues that much of the everyday social world is taken-for-granted. This is a world of routine where much of daily life is accomplished without engaging human analytical powers so does not involve active interpretation and reinterpretation. Rather it merely involves intentional acts.

Consequently, interpretative sociology should focus on general meanings that exist as part of the routine of daily life. This can be seen as a stock of knowledge that is based on previous experiences and passed down as tradition in practices (see Section 2.2.4, for an explanation of these tacit aspects). In addition, and has been discussed (see Section 2.1.3), Heidegger proposes an 'ontological' taken-for-granted world that is not implicit in the same way, rather, he extends it into the very grounding of our existence.

Schultz (Johnston, 1986) recommends the study of 'ideal types' as the best way to understand the taken-for-granted world of action and conduct within it. This is because the only social reality that can be comprehended is that which is "typically comprehended" (Johnston, 1986, p. 69). This is achieved by studying the subject's behaviour and inferring both the effect of the action and the intended effect. The analyst uses their own knowledge of customary behaviour and from this deduces the subject's 'in-order-to' and 'because' motives, from the knowledge of the 'type' to which the subject belongs (Johnston, 1986). Typification requires the development of categories, and as suggested in my theoretical development, this is necessary. However, it should always be approached with an underlying concern for my informant's depth, complexity and autonomy. In other words, the typifications I develop are not final, but are open to continual reassessment. Developing 'ideal types' is the production of categories and themes in grounded theory.

Typication is valuable for the analyst as it circumvents the problem of the search for the taken-for-granted structures that cannot be exposed through or by the subject. For example, Ricoeur's mediating symbolic structures (see Section 2.2.4). Instead it seeks a representation of how the taken-for-granted world is structured by subjects (Johnston, 1986, p. 69). So, rather than an understanding of their understanding, it is an understanding of their understanding as compared to a more general and abstract 'type'.

4.2 Being-in-the-world (ontology)

In addition to Shultz's methodology and concern for our taken-for-granted social practices is the ontological aspect of such practices. For Heidegger (cited in Jurich, 2000), practices are indicative of ontological postures in the world. Such practices inform our being in the world and through them meaning is constructed. Consequently, meaning can emerge in the *experience* of a practice, which connects with the notion that an ethic arises out of praxis, as well as from interaction that generates shared understanding (see Section 3.1.4). This meaning in turn becomes embodied in tradition, which can be characterised as a continuity in shared practices, and which individual acts presuppose. Thus, individuals act from an ontological posture not just from reflexive representations made of the world (Jurich, 2000). Such a posture, I have argued, (see Chapter 3) includes Being, experience and the poetic.

Heidegger argues that we are thrown into a tradition that allows certain things to show up as meaningful. Consequently, other things are 'covered over' (Foltz, 1995) (see Section 3.3.1). It is through the observation of practices in which things show up as an issue to the actors that one comes to an interpretation of the meaning of being-in-the-world for the actor (Jurich, 2000). Significantly, it is only through my investigatory separation that I am able to partly reveal the being-in-the-world of the actors. Prejudices are central to this approach as it is through not being able to be fully them that I may be able to approach their ontological and tacit taken-for-granted understandings (see Section 2.2.2).

My attempt to reveal my informants ontology is not obtained through a process of 'subject observing object', or even through a straight intersubjective interpretation. Rather, my own experiences and background of engagement in conservation practices may help illuminate certain aspects of the ontology in which the practices are embedded. The implication is that my understandings are in part my informants'. The possibility of sharing meaning is enhanced through the experience of shared practices and experiences, as much

as through symbolic (reflexive) interaction. Also, the essential insights to be gained through imagination, I propose, occur through this immersive level. Consequently, the ontological aspect is a central part of fieldwork (Jurich, 2000).

4.3 Method

The method I use is Grounded theory. Grounded theory's basic premise is that theory emerges from the research data collected. This occurs through the application of a systematic set of procedures to initially general and open research questions. This is more than a description, as it requires identifying constructs or categories, analyzing their relationships, context, and the processes involved. The initial phase of research involves a broad 'open' sampling of data that is relevant to the issue. From this, some relational categories are developed, from which some basic concepts can be derived. These categories and concepts will guide subsequent data collection, allowing further development of concepts into theories. In this particular logic of theory construction, data collection, analysis and theory formulation are interrelated. This allows a 'saturation' of recurring categories and allows follow up of unexpected findings. The two key procedures that inform and guide analysis, are making comparisons and asking questions. Memo-writing and developing diagrams can also be important facets of this process (Charmaz, 1990).

Grounded theory allows a range of philosophical positions to provide the conceptual roots for data analysis. The philosophical stance taken does, however, affect how the process of grounded theory itself is conceptualized. The symbolic interactionist school emphasizes interpretation, not seeing the concepts or theories emerging from the data as such, but rather as a 'creative' ordering placed upon it by the researcher (Charmaz, 1990). A phenomenological position would suggest that such 'creativity' is also manifest in the data itself.

Researchers always bring to research (as prejudices) the general philosophical and theoretical perspectives of their disciplines, as well as their biography and particular research interests. In a qualitative approach this is not seen as a hindrance but rather involves a process of becoming reflexively aware of such prejudice and therefore, forcing a broadening of awareness. However, the researcher should not bring to the research a set of preconceived concepts and categories through which to represent the data. The researcher is in part applying meanings to the research, the larger the range of those interpretations the

broader and richer the picture the researcher is able to develop (Charmaz, 1990). From a phenomenological perspective, grounded theory is a formalised way to try and make prejudices explicit and so reveal the taken-for-granted social and ontological aspects of the subject's practices. It encourages not only developing more insightful perceptions of the research subject's taken-for-granted world, but also of the taken-for-granted aspects of the research material itself.

This research involved literature reviews and fieldwork in the form of in-depth interviews and observations. This fieldwork took place with people engaged in the management of endangered species. At this point it should be noted that in order to retain my informant's anonymity no real names have been used in this study. This approach focuses on developing a rich field of data and researcher experience through which to approach the research (Lofland & Lofland, 1984).

My work processes broadly followed the ones outlined by Strauss (1987) in Figure 4.2. Initially it involved literature reviews of phenomenology and hermeneutics. I then carried out my fieldwork, which was spread over approximately two months. This involved note taking, observations and in-depth interviewing. On completion of the fieldwork there was a considerable period of analysis that entailed transcription and categorisation in order to develop themes. This was followed by further theoretical investigation to further theme (hypothesis and concepts) development. Writing-up was ongoing and integrated into all of these processes. In general the research has followed a backwards and forwards process of considering theory, then empirical data, then theory and so on. This is in order to allow linkages and themes to emerge.

Figure 4.2

Grounded theory work processes (Adapted from Strauss, 1987, p.17)

1. *Generative questions*

For making distinctions and comparisons, thinking of possible hypotheses, concepts and their relations.

2. *Conceptually dense theory*

Developing comprehensive linkages among the 'discovered' (created) concepts.

3. *Verification*

Theory not just discerned but existing in data.

4. *Relevance of coding to the real world of data.*

5. *Integration*

Determining which linkages are most important - the core of the evolving theory.
Becomes tighter as research continues (the core categories are the ones that best hold together)

6. *Memoing*

Keeping track of theoretical ideas.

7. *Re-examination of old data.*

8. *Writing*

This can help integration.

Chapter 5

Results

5.0 Introduction

This research is based upon story telling. I am producing a story about the world through attempting to analyse others' stories about the world. In doing this I am interested in investigating people's effort to make sense of what they are doing, including their confusions and inconsistencies. Their motivations, ethical understandings and actions are bound up with these stories and are in part revealed through them. As such these stories can also be considered as being 'of' the world. Both storytelling and practical acts can be considered as practices. This chapter concentrates on the informants' responses to my questions. The questions I posed expose my prejudices and concerns, and also what I am attempting to reveal.

In carrying out this fieldwork I was fortunate in being accepted as one of the community I was investigating. This was, I believe, partly because I was a volunteer helping with the management work, so I was seen as a contributing member of the group, rather than a freeloading observer. In addition to this, I have a background in working on islands. Also, within this community, research is a perfectly acceptable and valid activity, so people did not seem adverse to my investigations. I was also fortunate in that the topic of my study seemed to be of interest to the people involved. Several commented that they had also thought about issues involved with the management of nature.

There are many quotations in this chapter, as I would like people to speak for themselves as much as possible. I also want to convey the complexity and richness of the informants' discussion, which itself arose as one of the key themes of this empirical investigation. Some of the early questions asked directly for the informants to tell me stories. This is in contrast to the latter ones where particular opinions and definitions were asked for. This makes the earlier questions possibly more revealing (see appendix 1 for list of questions). However, in the latter questions storytelling was still often used in the answer to provide clarification.

Figure 5.1

Meta-themes:

1. The role of stories.
 2. The informants way of being in (and so understanding) the world
(epistemology/ontology)
-

5.1 Overview of the emergent themes

The following is a brief overview of the themes that emerged from my investigations and the structure of the Results chapter. While each section tends to be based on a particular question, in the organisation of this chapter I was not able to delineate fully each theme due to the rich and intertwined nature of my informants' discussion. The themes are more fully drawn together in the discussion chapter.

There are two meta-themes that arose in this investigation. One concerns the role of stories, and the other, epistemology and ontology (see Figure 5.1). These meta-themes are not really separate as the form and role of stories in a community reflects their ontology. The first sections of this chapter broadly consider the role of stories in endangered species management work, particularly with regards to experiences of the natural world. The second part of the chapter attempts to set out my informants' epistemology and ontology. This, as will become clear, is complex. However, through developing another layer of themes I have attempted to make some sense of this (see Figure 5.2).

The first theme (theme 1) highlights the different types of stories, particularly the idea of internal and external stories. The internal stories concentrated upon first hand experiences of the natural world. These internal stories were based on sustaining and, I suggest in part, justifying the understandings of the wildlife management community (theme 4). These were based upon ecological understandings. The external stories were mediated by economic and social concerns that exposed a tension between the necessity of the experience of nature and a preservationist based conservation that requires a significant media profile. The tension is further increased through commercial sponsorship. This in turn brings into focus (theme 2) my informants' understandings of the natural world as an object and subsequent attempts at its physical control, and its parallel consideration as being a production of social values. Treating the natural world as a social production

produced difficulty in making ethical decisions about our interactions with it. This in turn reveals tensions and confusions over what the natural world might be and what conservation is trying to achieve. Significantly, this position lies in opposition to the notion of intrinsic value, which is a concept central to conservation policy in New Zealand. Doubts of the ultimate 'truth' of science as a way of knowing, and about the concept of intrinsic value, involved appeals to less objective ways of knowing (theme 5). Themes 6 and 7 follow the threads of a fuller experiential epistemology as recognised by my informants.

The structure of the results does not faithfully follow the flow of the preceding discussion. This is because I have attempted to align the sections with the questions, in order to retain the richness and complexity of my informants' talk and to not force the themes too much upon the data.

Figure 5.2

Themes:

1. Different types of stories.
 2. Endangered species (nature) as objects:
 - Social valuing - icons, commodification.
 - Scientific facts -stewardship, controlled nature.
 3. The informant's inability to be clear about their conservation practices.
 4. Communal aspects of endangered species management work.
 5. Recognition of a broader epistemology.
 6. Recognition of the 'unknown' and 'wildness'.
 7. The importance of experience.
-

5.2 Personal stories (theme 1)

This section is based around the question; "Could you tell me about some of the more memorable experiences you have had in this work?" This produced a range of responses, which I categorised under the following headings:

- A. Interactions with other people
- B. Interacting with animals
- C. Being in nature
- D. Stories of nature and culture
- E. Stories about their work

Within these types were both stories internal to the Department of conservation (DoC) community and also stories told to people outside the DoC community. Stories about interactions with other people, or the actions of other people, were identified as the most common types of stories that the informants told (theme 4):

Kylie - "I think the ones you talk about a lot are, yeah, obviously the human interactive ones."

Indeed, much of the casual talk that I observed was social talk about other people, their personalities and actions, and the good and bad aspects of these.

Stories about interacting with wild animals were also common. The types of interactions varied considerably. They ranged from just sitting, watching and listening to them, to stories about responses of the animals to themselves when the informants had physical encounters with them. These included casual encounters and also encounters that involved the active management of the animals. Encounters with wild animals left impressions about the animals' character:

Kylie - "Yeah. Um, I guess, swimming with the sea lions. That was really, really amazing aye, I think they are just great animals, um, they're so curious and playful, and, um, just sort of like dogs. And this is a wild animal.....um, yeah, the same can be said for so much of the wildlife down there. Um, its hard to believe they are wild animals because, ar, yeah, they seem almost as interested in you as you are in them."

Individual species and individual animals were recognised as having distinctive 'personalities'. These gave them special significance, a distinctiveness and depth (theme 5):

Kylie- "...Because the Kakapo would have to be, rearing these chicks here. Yeah, and again you just have to marvel how they each got their own personality, and they are hatched with it. And, um, yeah they are just, just such amazing animals."

Also several of the informants used stories of particular events, in nature and interacting with animals, to put across particular ideas.

Another central thread of the stories was their concern for experiences of being in nature. Implicit in these stories was a separation between the natural world and the human social world and its productions. It was often seen as like stepping into another world, one where a different way of acting and understanding may be required (theme 5):

John- "...and you know, keep silent and just.....you sort of feel that you are involved in what's happening in the natural world."

This involved a notion of being 'out there', and of making an effort to do so (theme 7):

Bob - "Um, but a big part of that is being there and seeing the weather change, or seeing the change in behaviour, or the birds, or any wildlife for that matter. Um, is, is really great, and that is just part of being out there. You have got to be there to see it, you have got to be there to see the green glow at sunset."

Since much of the work involves living in isolated places there were also expressions of living in an isolated community and of being separated, or at least cut-off, from the outside 'real' human world (theme 4):

John- "you don't actually think about what is happening in the outside world till your ten day stint is over, and you have to, you know come back to reality, and you buy a newspaper and see what has been going on, and, except, because of the job you are doing you feel not quite as effected by, you know, a war in Palestine, or a famine in the Sahara, because you have got you own little focus on what you are working on."

'Nature' itself was described in such terms as mass, power and fecundity:

Bob - "And they [Sooty Shearwaters] are just flying straight at you, so there one here , like that, and another one here, like that. Really wicked, you know, full on concentration. But you are right in amongst it, and you get the full feeling of the numbers and the energy and the power of it."

And stories of feeling the wildness and harmony in nature, even a purity in a natural order (theme 5):

Kylie - "...Campbell, like the other Sub-Antarctics, some of the other Sub-Antarctics even more so. I don't think you can go there and not be touched by the wildness and the sense of harmony and balance that there is in the place. The way, you know, things should be. Um, so its sort of a hard thing to describe, you know, ...I really, really notice that in mainland ecosystems, yeah, they are sort hollow and resounding, there is, is not a balance there that, that there are in the more unmodified islands. An, err...its really amazing actually, I mean, I don't think you need to be an ecologist or have any understanding of the natural world, um, but it is a feeling in these places. They, yeah, they are just bountiful and balanced. Which, yeah, is not in the mainland sites."

Individual experience (events) and feelings are central to this storytelling (theme 7). For example, Kylie, when discussing the huge number of birds on the Snares comments:

"But the numbers, you know, there is just, so many. And the Snares with the Titi there, I mean, the sky is black with them when they come in. They are just there in their thousands, and the sound!, in the morning, when they were heading out, its just, just unreal, and there is a steady stream of birds from the, from the takeoff points. Yeah, those numbers are just amazing. (there are million of them?), there are millions, yeah, I wouldn't know..... is really quite a hard thing to get across to people, is just the, the tameness and the bountifulness, how many, of these birds there are."

Here, actual number of birds was not important, rather the experience itself. It is the feeling of the huge number of birds that is central. People seem to have developed an affinity with these, often remote and difficult to access, natural places and the experiences they had there. They enjoyed returning to them, and they were seen as special places both personally and for conservation itself. In this respect such places have a utopian aspect, being both projections and enclaves of 'how things ought to be'. This sense is composed of a mix of personal experiences and social imaginings (theme 6).

There were occasional stories about the domination of nature; of unexpected events, and of powerlessness in the face of natural events:

John - ".....and we couldn't drive around, and our boss in Queenstown is going, aww it would be really good if you could get there, cause then you will be there when its time for everything to happen.....aww, but we were powerless. It just nature is not letting us go in and there is nothing we can do about it."

One informant expressed by a more gentle domination of culture by nature:

Bob- " ...one of the muttonbird islands. And really feeling, the birds there dictate all the activity on the island, you know the numbers of birds and they [the Mutton birders] are there, you know, to harvest the birds, and live amongst them. And you are living amongst them.....I mean there is obviously a lot of modern things down there too, but it is an old sort of tradition, but it is ruled by the birds. You are on a bird island, sort of thing, everyone is there because of the birds."

Some of the informant's stories expressed the importance of the conservation work they were involved in. This was also an important part of their motivation, and involved personal satisfaction that was gained through jobs being accomplished:

Bob - "You know, his transmitter had died, it was like 2 weeks work, everyday going up the hill baiting him up in lines, setting a cage trap. Getting him using the cage trap, before, you know, before it was actually set, so he has got full trust in it. Then you know, taking the gamble and ... setting the cage trap, because you have got one hit at it. Cause if you don't catch him he's going to bugger off. Because

he's scared of it. Then you know, going up the next day and finding you have caught him. There is a lot of personal work gone into that, and it, there're always really satisfying moments you know."

5.3 The significance of stories (theme 5)

This section derives from responses to the question; "Do you think the stories produced about endangered species are important, and why?"

5.3.1 Personal reasons for story telling

One informant recognised telling stories as an important form of personal communication. Here the emphasis is not on social narratives, but relating of individual experiences (theme 7). So storytelling was related to personal expression and personal identity:

Bob - "Telling any yarn is important. You know, its how any individual um, communicates anything they want to communicate to anyone, whether it is their partner, girlfriend, boyfriend, dog, father, whatever.... Experiences always come up somewhere or you can relate an experience, someone's experience to one of your experiences.."

Several informants said that they enjoyed telling stories. For another informant stories helped resolve personal distaste of some of the work they were involved in (e.g., killing possums):

John - "...not very nice stories to tell. I suppose I tell the story because, like I was really affected by the work I was doing, and one way I find to deal with it is to, just turn it into something funny, and then you can look back at it and laugh at it. 'Cause otherwise you just look back and cry... It's horrible"

Stories were told to help other people understand them and also to express their personal motives and conflicts. They were also aimed at having others understand the wonders of nature as they have experienced it (theme 7). It may be also to place their mark on the

world as individuals. As one informant suggested, people tell more stories about themselves and other people than about the animals.

Stories were also seen as important for educating people, for informing them about the way things are:

Bob - "So from the education point of view, yes, really important, it's got to be done, well you know, the facts need to be correct, um. There is always a bit of colour and drama you might add, but you know, perhaps but um, that's telling yarns. But, um, the idea is that people are finding out, not just about, you and what you do and the way you live but, about those birds."

Implied by this quote is a separation of facts from values. The facts are seen as being separate from the story and not produced by it. Consequently stories are not 'of' the world but 'about it'. They are descriptive. Following this thread, another informant saw stories as being useful for management purposes (e.g., supplying information on animal behaviour), but little else. Such an understanding sees stories in a purely pragmatic sense, not as having a role in making up the world (theme 2). In contrast, other informants saw stories and storytelling about endangered species management as being intrinsic to our understanding of the world, as well as being informative:

Kylie - "...that's why people value them [through storytelling], and put effort and money or allow taxation to be put into their conservation. So it's really, really important. But, more than just that financial side of things, it's important for people's spiritual or emotional health to know that they are there"

So stories about animals, in contrast to being just about people, can provide an important emotional connection to the natural world, even if people don't see the animals themselves. Stories have an ability to reveal and express our inter-relatedness to nature. Such inter-relatedness is supported by ecological understandings (theme 5):

Kylie - "Um, it's obviously important to people to know that these things are being looked after. Um, it's part of our culture, it's part of who we are, you can't really get away from it. Yeah, as an ecologist it makes perfect sense, because everything

is related and interacting all the time, every action there is a reaction. And it, has a flow on effect, so there is always an equilibrium, I guess, that's been searched for but never achieved. Well a continuum I guess is really what it is, in an ecological sense."

The desire to care for nature has cultural links. For another informant, stories were seen as a way to invoke action from the listener and that in order to look after things work was required:

Bob - "The main thing is that you pass on the situation of the bird and the work that is required. Like saying, you know, if I didn't do this well then it is not going to happen. You know, well we might have them for another 20 years, but then we won't have them."

Here stories are understood as acting in an ethical sense as a both a guide and motivator for actions.

The importance of people knowing endangered species are being looked after suggests the importance of spreading stories outside the endangered species management community. Without spreading stories outside the conservation community they risk getting lost or forgotten (theme 1):

Steve - ".....because no one will know otherwise, if you don't tell a story. Basically, because, I mean, conservation world in its own right is pretty small really. If you don't sort of blow it up a bit and push it out there, it doesn't go and no one knows."

Some informants felt they should put more personal effort into helping the spread of stories:

Frank- "... he wanted to make a documentary. A private documentary, although he wanted to sell it. And we were really stand offish, about that, and really didn't want anything to have anything do with that side of it. But, I think in the long run, you should really, um, should be embracing those sort of things, you know. And being

as part, as much part as you can by the way of helping the cause that way. Because yeah, the stories don't grow otherwise.”

As suggested above, several informants recognised conservation, and in particular the Department of Conservation, as being a community in itself (theme 4):

John - “DoC is a very inbred society. I mean most people are ‘involved’ with other DoC people, and you know, maybe its because of the type of people who do it, they all hang around together. But, um, probably the information doesn’t get out as much, through little stories.maybe I’m being a bit harsh.”

The stories told here could be considered ‘unofficial’ stories. These are personal stories that are told to people both inside and outside the direct conservation community (i.e., to friends and acquaintances, etc.). However, some informants suggested that they were careful about the type of stories they told for the fear of other people not being interested:

John - “Yeah, you don’t tell stories in mixed company about, you know, ‘cause people just think you are weird if you tell them that I saw this bird building a nest. And you think this is something fantastic, and they are going, aw yeah all right.”

One informant thought that the stories they told needed to be dramatic so people would be interested. Dark stories with impact that people can relate to that helped evoke the imagination:

John - “....watching a bird build a nest doesn’t really interest them. But, me bashing possums on the head is, ‘cause it is this incredibly dramatic sort of image that they conjure up, so I suppose that’s probably the story that I have told the most.”

Also at a more general level, John saw the process of telling stories as providing an imaginative picture of other places and events. This exposes a tension in what story telling is about; First, to disseminate facts and, second, to excite the imagination and emotions, or a combination of both. Following this, the stories told by any one individual do not seem to

have been necessarily consistent with each other. It depended upon their intended use. In general the stories tended to be expressions of prior themes embodied in particular events, or particular events out of which new themes arose.

5.4 A community (theme 4)

As has already been mentioned, there has been some concern about putting conservation understandings and experiences out into the wider community. Several informants mention the closeness, or 'inbredness' of the DoC community, and that stories about their experiences needed to be spread around outside that community, so the public knew what was going on. There was a degree of contradiction, however, in the reluctance expressed by informants to let 'outsiders', such as sponsors, move into their area of responsibility:

Jane - "As long as some integrity around, they don't sort of overstep the boundaries, so they want commercial rights to try and influence policy.....its like if [a sponsor] wanted to take [a bird] around the country in a cage, sort of thing. We are not going to give you your money until you do, type thing. So if it starts influencing policy, it wouldn't, it would be counter productive....."

Indeed, undemanding sponsors were seen as good sponsors. For some informants this protective stance also included Maori involvement. One informant said that Maori should not have control over management in co-management situations. People qualified for the job regardless of ethnic background should be making the decisions. Final decisions, according to this view, need to be made on sound management practices, rather than on 'cultural' reasons. This is because the informant felt much traditional knowledge had been lost, consequently, they did not accept that just because of ethnic background people should hold power, as they might not know more about the topic than 'the person in the street'. This informant did, however, recognise the importance of traditional Maori ties to indigenous species.

One informant suggested that if the land in question was Maori land, then DoC needed to consult with the Maori owners. However, where there is no Maori claim to land it is less important. Following this, another informant suggested if Maori have ownership

of land they should have a considerable say in what goes on there. In both these cases it is interesting to note that the Western view of legal ownership and private property is central.

Other reservations included that Maori involvement in decision making can make some decisions take longer and increase the bureaucracy:

Steve - "But if it creates more bureaucracy I don't like it. But I just love Maori people. And I love some Pakeha people, and I think that we should be one, exactly. And I think that we should as Pakeha, absolutely respect the Maori ethics and the Maori way that they had with nature. I think we really should respect that. We can get very arrogant and we shouldn't. So no I'm for, I'm a bit against the bureaucracy and stuff. It just gets bigger and bigger (more consultation?), more consultation, yeah, there must be a better way."

Steve, like several other informants, was supportive of using Maori knowledge for conservation (theme 5). They said Maori understandings have a lot to offer conservation. Another thought that it was just good to get people involved, and in particular it was good to get Maori involved, because they own a lot of land that could be conserved. There was also the need to involve Maori in conservation as Pakeha people dominate it. A bicultural theme was also expressed in the suggestion that the two cultures need to work together more, and Hui (meetings) were seen as a step in the right direction. However, for most informants there was an implicit tendency towards overlaying Maori input onto Western social frameworks and Western science (theme 2). This was evident, for example, in the importance of private ownership and formal qualifications for several informants.

5.5 Conservation and the public

In response to the question;" What do you think is the best way to inform the public about conservation issues?", my informants suggested the dissemination of stories as one way (theme 1). Most informants, however, thought that getting people involved in conservation activities was the most effective way of spreading conservation issues (theme 7). Some emphasised the involvement of children who they thought are more impressionable than adults:

Jane - "Getting them involved definitely. Definitely hands on. Plant a tree, make it easy for people, especially children, 'cause children go home to their parents saying what they were doing."

Such involvement was seen as a way of getting people out into the natural world, getting them to experience it:

Kylie - "Get them involved for sure, it has to be. Yeah, aww (hands on?) Yeah, I think, well yeah experiencing anyway, not necessarily um, out carting hoppers [Kakapo food containers] around. But, um, but um, getting them out into the, into the environment."

Programmes, such as volunteer work and school trips, were seen as good ways to get people involved. This has a close relation to storytelling in that the people involved get to produce their own stories which are then passed on to their friends and acquaintances.

Several informants suggested that education was important. Indeed, it was central to getting people involved in conservation projects in the first place. Education was thought to be much broader than just formal schooling, as young people are educated just as much in the community and family as at school:

Bob- "I suppose that's the effect of education more than anything isn't it. But, um, aiming at all scopes, I think there is huge hope 60 years down the track. You know kids these days are learning really good things, but they can go home and get taught conflicting things. And um, but you know, everyone has their conflicting views and so forth."

Although there is conflict involved, for Bob, hope for the future lies in education. This amounts to a broader understanding of conservation beyond just endangered species management. Indeed, another informant stressed that conservation starts at home, and was ultimately a bigger picture that involved a certain consciousness:

Frank - "Conservation is a funny word though to me, because,sort of species and conservation are sort of almost two different things to me. You know what I

mean, well it's a big picture eh, and it , and in that sense conservation starts at home, in your home ... Right down to where you put your rubbish in the corner, to,....and conservation to me is not necessarily about rushing out there and saving species and stuff like that, it is a broad picture about how you see things I think. How we relate to the world as much as anything."

The last comment highlights epistemological questions involved with relating (theme 5), and links, I suggest, with the need for personal experience through active participation to develop a relation (theme 7).

All of my informants thought the use of the mass media to promote the conservation message was also important. The dissemination of information about conservation activities via mass media stands in contrast to active participation that many informants also thought was important (theme 2):

Steve- "Television media is a very good way because people always watch television. And so through TV is a very good way. Information, um display, the DoC offices, there should be more and more public awareness, I think that that might have been actually, a weaker point of a lot of conservationists, their public awareness."

'Public awareness' is a way to spread stories outside the conservation community. Such stories tend to be 'official stories' (theme 1). They may be vetted and certain aspects highlighted to the detriment of other aspects. This may be to emphasise the success of programmes on the one hand, or highlight damage on the other. One informant, for example, suggested that the intensity of the Chatham Island Black Robin recovery programme had left the surviving individuals with strange and neurotic behavioural patterns. My informant referred to them as 'plastic birds'. This is not the image of the programme that is portrayed to the general public. Using this example is not an attempt to undermine the successful aspects of the programme; rather it is to point out that vetting does occur. Indeed, several of my informants suggested spicing up stories for dissemination to the public via the mass media. They need to be 'feel good' stories as such stories help the public get emotionally involved in conservation (theme 1):

John - "I think people get quite involved. Yeah, becomes a bit of a soap opera for them, yeah, and they can actually related to what is going on. So yeah, it's important to get that kind of soap opera type of information out to people, so they can actually, go wow, you know, they saved the Kokako at Mapua, and isn't that great."

So it is short, happy and exciting magazine-type stories about cute endangered animals that evokes emotional involvement that people will follow in the media. Ugly animals, such as slugs, do not evoke the necessary response. John said that people do not really care about scientific aspects of endangered species, it is the 'cute factor' that is important:

John - "A lot of people don't seem to be interested in the actual fascinating detail about them. Like Kakapo are cute to look at, wow, aren't they cute. But there are so many interesting facets of their natural history and their anatomy and stuff, and most people don't, you know, you can talk about the feathers on the face and blah, blah, blah, and you know, their nocturnal habits and stuff, and when it comes down to it, someone just wants to see a nice big fat green parrot, you know, feeding a chick."

Another informant felt the need to emphasise biological aspects. Conservation should use the media to educate people in science based natural history. This is an emphasis on the pre-interpretation of the natural world by science and the media (theme 2). Here the natural world could be seen as being distanced by science and media, as well as in some sense being brought closer through understanding.

One informant said that media do not give stories to the public about individual bird's personalities. This may be because of an accent on species in conservation (theme 1):

Steve - "The public are generally introduced to these birds through the television media, or through radio, and they learn the basic biology, is being told. And also the way that they are managed, the human side of managing these birds. But what isn't so much told is the personalities of these birds. There are exceptions, Kea are the notable exception.... But with other species, no it's not so much, is, um, that the

media are aware of, is that some of these birds have incredible personalities. Takahe is a good example. A lot of people consider them overgrown Pukekos, an ugly, some people say they are an ugly bird. They are a bird that never get much in the media. And yet in the terms of dealing, and handling, the very little time I have spent with Takahe they are the most affectionate birds I have ever worked with.”

There was also an emphasis on access being mediated via the media, and it is the endangered bird’s media profile that is important. One informant stressed the need to think of new innovative ways to get people involved. For example, footage from live cameras at nests on the Internet:

Steve - “ But otherwise how can it do any harm, it can’t , it can generate some money too [putting in cameras at nests etc. to view on the Internet].

Me - “I’m just concerned , instead of people going out and seeing nature, they sit at home?”

Steve- “Yeah, they sit at home and watch it, so less disturbance...

Me - “that doesn’t concern you at all , you think that is the best way to approach it?

Steve - “Ethically it doesn’t concern me, I mean it’s better than these people wandering in the bush and disturbing the birds in their natural habitat”

In complete contrast one informant was concerned that the Department of Conservation, in its advocacy role, had substituted personal experience for media access. Her concern was that an emphasis on media did not encourage people to experience the natural environment. In addition, it increased the potential for endangered species, and indeed conservation generally, to become abstracted and subsumed into technology (theme 2):

Kylie - “....so DoC runs web pages, to inform people about conservation because they feel that is the most effective way of getting to the wider community.. Isn’t that appallingyeah, yeah so it just becomes another, yeah, another topic on the Internet.... I mean, I really feel the real shame about that is that it really relegates things like Kakapo into the cute and furry sort of category, and that’s how people relate to it, they don't relate to their wildness. They don't relate to their, their place

in the, in the, ecological system, they don't, yeah, they its just ...grrr... yeah, thats all, its just like a telly-tubby or, you know, no different, no different."

This media editing includes another central tension. This involved the need to keep the public interested along with a need to put on the 'right face', as there could be commercial imperatives involved, for example, possibilities for ongoing sponsorship. The tension is highlighted by a commercial requirement for an emphasis on success, while there is also the necessity to emphasize a broader notion of decay and loss, as conservation in New Zealand is primarily about halting loss. John expressed this tension, by suggesting that the public may actually be more interested in stories of failure rather than success (theme 1):

John - "So the stories are really important, but I think it's a hard task too, to do it in a way that makes people interested. People are more interested in, you know, about learning about the famines in the Sahara, you know, you sort of, like you have this death toll thing attached to a story, or you know, the amount of human tragedy or something....yeah, and that's what everyone sort of wants to read, and happy stories just don't rate in the media, because its just another story."

5.6 Science as a guide

This section is based upon the question; "To what extent do you think science should guide humans in their interaction with nature?" In general, science was seen as a useful guide for human interaction with the non-human world:

John - "I think, by science by providing understanding of nature and also by providing the means to preserve it, is important. So if we understand the biology of these animals we can um, maintain or save them or, you know, ensure that the um, the ecosystem survives. Um, then that is really important particularly with, you know, with the encroaching world on natural places. So in the overall long term science, is exceedingly important for continuing to have natural places for people to experience, however, they want."

Here the natural world is being saved for people, science is important as it allows us to control and manage it (i.e., to maintain or save natural areas) (theme 2). John does not link

science, and the power it gives humans, with the human expansion that he sees as the major problem.

Another informant thought science complemented the way humans 'naturally' interact with the things around them:

Kylie - "I, think the way we relate to things, and the way we um, are programmed, or the way we.....arr, interact with stuff around us, is in quite a structured way, and science is just a structure. Yeah, a framework to help us, yeah, process or, process information and put the pieces of the jigsaw together."

In this quite complex quotation a reference is made to humans as information processors. Through such structured processing things around us are put into an order. This itself is a scientific psychological description of human cognitive processes. Implicit in this quote is that 'reality' is separate and requires a structure to be applied to put its pieces together (theme 2). There is also recognition that such an understanding may itself be socially 'programmed', suggesting that the scientific way of thinking (structuring) may also be. This recognition of an openness to science, that it is not 'Truth', is also implied by another informant:

Frank - "At the end of the day a scientist is someone that, well no its not, largely looking for information, aren't they, they end up presenting facts, on something. Which is hopefully as close to what it is as what is really out there."

Following my discussion in the theory chapters reality here is seen as a flux that science makes representations of. This brings up the problem of what reality is and the relation of science to it. It also leaves space for what science does not reveal (theme 5):

Kylie - "I think there is more to species and ecosystems than science can ever define."

In contrast two others said that conservation management should be based on Western science. They were more hopeful of developing a true scientific picture:

Jane - "If you can get unambiguous science that can only be interpreted in one way, that, that would be excellent. If you could say this is good because, this does this, does this. Then you would be able to inform the public. Public could know what is going on, they would feel a lot better about going and seeing something and know exactly what it was doing. And, you know, that would be, would be an excellent sort of weapon."

Here, through science interpreting experiences of nature, such experiences are improved. Another informant also said that scientific interpretation could help people's interaction through enhancing their appreciation of nature. In addition, another suggested the need to simplify scientific interpretation of nature for public consumption, in other words the need to reinterpret the interpretation (theme 2). This is not about people experiencing 'nature' but it being pre-interpreted for them through scientific description.

In contrast, others thought that such scientific interpretations could detract from people's enjoyment and experiences (theme 7). Indeed, for them alternative ways to interact with the environment are valid (e.g., through meditation). Another informant introduced the 'spiritual' as a valid and important understanding of 'reality' for them (theme 5):

Larry - " There has been a spiritual aspect and it's been very important to me. With Kokako, its the calls, some of the calls that they produce, which have really got a peculiar resemblance, for instance. This is a really interesting, interesting point about the calls. They have got a resemblance to early Bon po Religion in Tibet.... The only reason it is connected, the calls of Kokako, is the sounds made to induce a hypnotic or a meditational state. These bowls made by the early Tibetans, you can still get them, made from different metals, in by using a piece of wood or stick they make a resonance right!. And this resonance certainly has some hypnotic effect on at least the human mind, and I believe the minds of birds and other animals probably too. Now Kokako seems to produce resonance of its own natural, its own natural ability. Resonance can be produced by a lot of birds. By any song bird, by bouncing off trees and rocks at a distance, but I have been lucky enough to hear these calls made by putative ----, very close. And there was still an incredible

degree of resonance, so they must be able to produce it from their larynx, this resonance. And it has a hypnotic quality.”

There were some concerns that science was fundamentally a means to an end. Consequently, we needed to be guided by intuition (i.e., deciding the end). One informant thought that we needed someone with ‘vision’ to be asking the right questions (theme 5).

5.7 Making sense of what they are doing (theme 3)

Some informants seemed to have thought a lot about the issues raised in the questions prior to my interviews. One, for example, admitted to having been considerably influenced by a book they had read. Others had not thought about the issue in the same way and found the questions difficult to the extent that it involved things they had not attempted to put into words before. Also some people were less articulate than others were. The questions were designed to get the informants to attempt to verbalise their understandings of what they were doing. However, in attempting to rationalise this they inevitably fell into contradiction:

Jane - “... nature would be the unmodified environment, but well, nature is everywhere isn’t it. You can’t get away from it even if you go to the city, so yeah.
Nature - I would define that as natural. A natural system, unmodified.”

This example could be read as merely involving a problem of definition, however, the problem of what is ‘natural’, particularly with regards to human effects on the non-human world is a central difficulty and fundamentally affects what the informants were trying to achieve in conservation.

They all attempted to be consistent and several informants were concerned whether they were making sense. Some consciously realised that their arguments may not be making sense, while others seemed oblivious to the fact.

Some informants seemed less comfortable with having their understandings questioned. One, flatly refused to answer questions they thought were unanswerable, or at least attempted to get me to define them more clearly, so in effect to answer the question for them. Others attempted to work through to an answer ‘on the fly’, which seemed to be

an individual style of thinking, but was particularly prevalent if they had not thought about the issue in this way before. Some implied there were limits to language (theme 6):

Kylie - “I don’t think you can go there and not be touched by the wildness and the sense of harmony and balance that there is in the place. The way, you know, things should be. Um, so it’s sort of a hard thing to describe, you know.”

Most of my informants ended up appealing to passion, intuition and so on (theme 5):

Bob - “I believe, a large part of this work is natural intuition and yeah, how you harmonise with it, and communicate with it, and feel it and so forth.”

This confusion and problems in being able to be clear about what conservation is about is displayed in many of the other quotations used in this Results chapter. Although there may be confusion over their thoughts and inconsistencies, my observations revealed a group of people who are extremely dedicated to what they are doing, they *act with consistency, dedication and energy*. One informant suggested that the strength for the work came from desire:

Bob - “We are fighting a battle, you don't do that without some strength, even if you don't understand what your desire or drive is, you have it.”

5.8 Science and ecology’s role

The importance of science and the inability of my informants to be clear about their position can be considered further through the ethical problem of whether to conserve ecosystems, species or individuals. The following is based around the question; “In the context of endangered species do you think ecosystems, species or individuals are most important? Why?” The informants generally approached this from a scientifically based epistemology. Furthermore, the discussion points to such an understanding leading to a stewardship position.

5.8.1. Ecosystems, species or individuals (theme 3)

The conservation programs the informants are involved in are focused on stopping the extinction of individual species. However, when asked directly, there was no consensus on whether ultimately they should be attempting to save ecosystems or species. This is because, I suggest, ecological understandings remain unclear over this matter. What does need to be noted is that individual animals were not seen as a focus for concern. This stands in contradiction to some stories, which emphasised individual personalities (the uniqueness of individuals). The problem of individual suffering, which at times occurs in their work, is justified through the utilitarian notion of such suffering being overridden by its contribution to the greater good of the species.

One informant suggested that species were the most important because it is on endangered species where the most money is spent. What the public value are the high profile species that people find attractive. Another said that species have the highest priority because ecology is so interconnected and complex to fully understand so we have to focus on one thing:

Steve - “....ecosystems is a word I don't particularly like very much. It includes absolutely everything, it can be a bit intangible actually. A lot of people talk, we have got to save ecosystems, but basically we can't save, ecosystems are always under states of change, and they are all basically human induced..... So to actually save an ecosystem is impossible. You can certainly help reduce the impacts on them, but I don't see the great importance of doing that, well I do, I see a great importance in doing that, I think it is important. I think we have got to put endangered species first, because they are going to disappear while we are mucking around changing the ecosystem, which might not even have an endangered species. So it is just a matter of priority, to me, its priority. We have to look what is really important first.”

Effectively he is suggesting that, in contrast to ecosystems, species are more 'pure and stable'. This is one way out of the complexity of the problem, the other is also mentioned and that is intangibility and its acceptance. There is the possibility that Steve is accepting the intangibility and doing the best he can with the knowledge there is (theme 6). The difficulty lies in deciding what is really important as the problem of prioritising is complex

and full of dilemmas, indeed is intrinsic to it. Consequently, just taking the simplest most easily definable 'part' and saving that is possibly inadequate. Following are some of the thoughts on this by my informants. Several suggested that saving a species helps save associated things (e.g., habitat, and other species) through a 'follow on effect':

John - "...usually by focusing on individual species you have a follow on effect for everything else around them, so like Kakapo here they got rid of Kiori, well that's helped, you know, all the seedling plants and the lizards and the all the insects and that sort of thing as well. So, I think if you just did it just for Kakapo, and ignored everything else you still get so much follow on. That you had actually helped all round."

Saving species was also seen to retain biodiversity. Several informants also stressed the importance of endangered species in ecological systems:

John - "...so you get into the web of life, type (sure yeah)....Well that what I always think of when I think of ecology. It's just, the inter-relatedness of, of everything in an ecosystem. Um, yeah, it's partly because you go well, if the Kakapo aren't there does it actually affect anything? It probably does, they probably spread seeds and all sorts of stuff which won't happen if they are not there. Um, but they are basically not there anymore ..so....That one's a bit tricky....I don't know, 'cause they are in such low numbers anyway. Um, it probably not going to make any difference if they are not there, or otherwise."

However, there was some difficulty justifying it, as some species may be ecologically redundant. In the long term something else fills the niche and there would be a new ecology. One informant avoids this sort of ecological redundancy argument by expanding a purely physically based diversity (as described by natural science) into a metaphysical one (theme 6):

Bob - "Well, you can argue that [putting effort into saving species] both ways, you can say what is the point, like we have changed the ecology and they can't handle it, f**k them. But, um, I obviously don't believe that. So I think it is important

because we have um, huge arrays of life, and therefore energy out there. And different ways of, that the world is understood, I mean obviously a tree understands the world different than we do. And um, it is really important ecologically to maintain all that diverseness, out there, physically and metaphysically, really. Um, because these things do have a life force, you know, well some of them have survived for huge amounts of time.”

In the process he alludes to the unknown and indescribable. However, others suggested that saving endangered species is not as important as saving the environment as a whole. With regards to the New Zealand situation, where endangered species are placed on offshore islands or small mainland islands, it presents the problem of what the long term aims of conservation might be. Most informants admitted that it is not going to be possible to resurrect pre-European ecosystems on the mainland:

Jane - “On the Kakapo they are spending heaps of money breeding them up, which they have to do because they are so low in population. But they are not spending enough.... They are not ever likely to go anywhere because if they release them anywhere else they are just going to get killed straight away.”

Following this line of thought another informant suggested that the healthier the ecosystem the easier it is for species to survive. Indeed, they felt it was the environment that the endangered species live in that is the problem. Consequently, they suggested ‘fixing’ the environment to fit the species. This is, however, putting the emphasis back on the species rather than the ecosystem.

One informant suggested that it is purely a matter of choosing the most practical and effective methods to approach conservation. Another proposed that the most important method is predator control, by removing all the pest species everything will settle back into its natural order. However, most doubted that the complete removal of predators on the mainland could be achieved or, given the likely methods required, it even being desirable:

Jane - “Well, even if it were possible I don’t think they will do it. The same people that want to save the ecosystems, are the same ones who aren’t too keen on viruses wiping things out. (Yeah, right like GE stuff) Yeah right, GE and just VPI? And

that sort of stuff (Miximytosis?) Well, yeah, yeah, things like that. They are not too keen on releasing more agents into the environment to cure something that's already been released. Introducing another species to control a species. You are just introducing something else to complicate things. So I don't think saving a small species and putting them on remote islands, is going to do anything, for saving the environment as a whole."

Central to the preceding discussion would seem to be a problem of whether looking after the parts will flow into looking after the whole or vice versa, and also of which is most important. This is a dilemma expressed by John:

John - "As far as achieving management goes, if I were to say I want to save this endangered species and that was my only goal, and that all I had to worry about, I would love to come to a place like this and modify it 100% to suit my animal. So that I wouldn't care what species were destroyed, or what bad plants were brought in. I would plant all these dreadful weeds everywhere, if they suited my species that would be fantastic. Umm, But,you know, it comes down to have you got enough spaces to do that, can you say right, this island we are just going to have the Kakapo, and this we will have the Kokako, and this one we will have the something else. And we end up with this very artificialI have saved the Kakapo but the island is just crap."

So this puts the emphasis back on to having a place (a habitat) to put saved species, as if we are only concerned with species we end up with a collection of species with nowhere to live:

Bob- "I think ecosystems, because if you don't have ecosystems you are going to have a hell of a lot more endangered species. You can use flagship species, like Kakapo, or Kokako or whatever, but basically you, .. , to have them survive you need the ecosystem to survive."

However, what Bob is really saying is that the species are most important, the ecosystems are being saved for the good of the species not the ecosystems as 'entities' in themselves.

Also one informant suggested that it will be possible to use technology (i.e., genetic engineering) to make species such as Kakapo in the future. But they also thought that this is not what conservation is about, rather it is about maintaining their place in the ecosystem:

Kylie - "I would say ecosystems. (Is there a reason, any thoughts about why you would choose that?). Yeah, because.....arr, because yeah, we have the technology to take the genes and, you know, make [Kakapo]. But that's not, what I think we are about. And yeah, we have the technology to take the individual andyou know, the individual Kakapo and look after them in another way [e.g., in a zoo]. But again, I don't think it is what we are about, I think what we are about is maintaining their place in the ecosystem, maintaining their wildness. That's what that it's about, yeah."

Here the emphasis is away from saving species themselves, or indeed ecosystems, but something less definable - 'wildness' (theme 6).

5.9 Stewardship (theme 2)

Looking after nature is a central theme in the preceding section, whether that is focused on species or ecosystems. Not to act was seen as a 'cop out'. To do nothing was cast in the negative of saying "they can't handle it, so f**k them" (Bob). Fixing problems links back to the informant's motives that involved leaving the world a better place:

John - "And, you know, there are huge problems all round the world but you have just chosen one to deal with, and you are making all the effort you can to deal with that."

Stewardship is linked with fixing nature. In other words, nature needed to be looked after because it is broken or damaged (theme 2):

Frank - "...it's the environment they live in that is giving them their problems. More so than who they are and what they are.for most endangered species it is the environment that, fix the environment and you will fix the problems."

Some informants thought that it was possibly too late to restore ecosystems to the way they were prior to European arrival, as many species had already been lost. There was also a realisation of the unstable nature of ecosystems and of DoC's role in attempting to retain or resurrect a previous ecological situation:

John - "In the long term something else will fill the niche, or (so it could be predators so you end up with a new ecology.) Yeah, so yeah, so their time has sort of gone, really, and we are just fighting a battle to try and maintain it at a state it was, or we perceived it was when, you know, we have arbitrarily said when white, yeah, Westerners reached the islands. So ecologically the world will keep ticking on whether they are there or not and you know if they were vital for spreading the seed of some plant, well that plant will go extinct. And you know, and something else will take over."

This realisation reveals stewardship as an inevitable position that conservation is obliged to take with its present aims (theme 2):

Kylie - "Yeah, and I mean you never, never going to be how they were. But that doesn't diminish the, um, the importance of an endangered species in a system. Yeah, I don't, I don't think can put New Zealand, how it was. And I don't really think that is the objective, but what I think the objective is, is that there's Kakapo again, yeah their place in the system become a functional part of it. Yeah, sort of, sort of locked up as almost a refugee. Yeah, as a ward of the state..."

However, most thought that conservation was about minimising damage of humans on native things:

Jane - "most people don't realise that if you don't save species then something else is going to suffer afterwards. You know, a chain effect, they are going to affect everything around them. You know, forests (damage to the ecology) yeah, you know, yeah...effected in the forest, (gonna change), gonna turn into weeds and things like that. And so, I think, aww yeah, I think, in sort of the 50s and 60s and

70s, people sort of started realizing what that damage they were doing, and sort of, would have to spend quite a bit of money to get... well not to back how it was, but limit the damage that has already been done and try torestore.... Well, minimise the damage, I think.”

Here conservation is about stopping damage to stop a continuing cycle of loss. Some informants put the emphasis on changing humans rather than changing nature. This could be achieved through advocacy, which involved changing people’s behaviour. Wildlife management was seen as a way to contribute to this change (theme 1). This involves allowing people access to ‘their’ natural heritage:

Bob - “And I also think it very important, we can’t change the fact that people are now part of New Zealand as well. And they need, and I’m a reasonably strong supporter of perhaps, um, minimal impact, but of having people, you know, New Zealanders having access to these places to, to enjoy it and to see it. Um, perhaps you could say that is sort of like a natural zoo, sort of thing.”

Here Bob highlights experiencing nature as a “natural zoo”; where nature is controlled and has a designated form for people to enjoy and see (theme 2). Also of note is that, humans as immigrants, get special status over other 'immigrants', which are not part of New Zealand. Another informant continues the anthropocentric natural zoo theme:

Kylie - “But, but there is certainly a place for people in that, and I think that is part of the vision is now in these refuges because, things are so threatened, the balance is so fragile, there is this limited accessibility, I think the vision is that these ecosystems are available to everyone, because it is their heritage, it’s their um, yeah, it’s part of them.”

There is an emphasis on cultural identity as these places are not where people actually live. Which is in everyday urban and rural New Zealand. They are kept as separate ‘controlled’ spaces.

However, when asked about the long term goals of conservation in New Zealand the emphasis came back to notions of repair. Nature is ‘broken’ and needs resurrecting:

Bob- “We’ve made a lot of our country, a large percentage of our country available to wildlife. Um, a lot of that available country needs a lot of conservation work, to, to make it more than just a stand of trees. That had the potential to provide homes for Kakariki and Kaka and Kakapo. We need it to be providing homes too for Kakariki, Kaka and Kakapo. Not just them, all the insects that go with it and blah, blah, blah.”

This involved fulfilling the DoC vision of maintaining intact (indigenous) ecosystems on the mainland. This requires the reintroduction of rare species back into their natural range. So in the mean time this means keeping numbers high and scientifically managing rare species to stop populations from genetically skewing (i.e., becoming inbred) etc., that is to keep populations healthy:

Jane - “Just keeping the numbers high and scientifically manage how they breed, so there’s not going to be skewed populations and things (inbreeding....), yeah, just keeping the populations healthy. In captivity, or in controlled environments. Like on islands, or Mount Bruce, just keeping the populations healthy enough so when the chance arises they will be able to, you know, put them back to their natural range.”

One informant said that the current situation (island refuges) was merely ‘fire fighting’ and unacceptable:

Kylie - “It’s just fire fighting at the moment, so yeah the vision is that in a hundred years, all these wonderful creatures that we have got hiding out, on these refuges have a place back, back in the world as they did previously. Yeah, I mean, that is not to the exclusion of, of locking up of, of habitat.”

Ultimately the goal was is to protect species so they can survive without help in future. However, such areas require much management, in particular ongoing predator control. Predators such as rats, stoats, weasels, and cats, needed to be removed to allow endangered species to be put back in their original mainland habitats.

5.10 Predator control

Most informants felt that DoC is unlikely to be able to clear the mainland of predators, but rather could create 'islands' of predator free habitat (theme 2):

Kylie - "It's, it's so that there's representative ones there, um. So yeah I guess the eradication of major introduced species, yes, stoats, ferrets, possibly cats, and you know, probably not from the whole country, but certainly from the spaces we have set aside for those purposes."

Such spaces at present require high management input:

John- "I think for a lot of New Zealand birds, unless they find a way to really control vast areas from predators, it's always going to be very restricted. I mean, Kioroi sanctuary in Wellington (yes) is a interesting place because, yep, they have gotten rid of the predators, and they have this little oasis, but I think it is high management sort of effort to do it."

Such management is ongoing:

John - " Mainland populations just aren't feasible, without constant predator control. So you keep numbers down by trapping and poisoning and stuff, I suppose Mapua, in the North Island is where that has worked really well for the Kokako. But they have found that they have to keep doing it, yeah, you can't just do it once and step back, you just got to keep putting them away..."

Here predators are thought of as the enemy - "got to keep putting them away". In contrast to, for example, Kakapo, which one informant suggested were, "nice peaceful creatures" (Bob); predators are 'nasty' animals destroying the 'balance of nature'. To remove them is to create an oasis. Humans need to fight back, indeed as expressed by several informants, conservation 'is waging a war', on behalf of the vulnerable. Here, there is an emphasis on both 'peace' and 'harmony' and 'war and fighting'. This expresses a dichotomy in notions of the character of the non-human world, one of both harmony and discordance (theme 3)

and also the theme of social imperatives affecting how nature is characterised (theme 2). Diversity is linked with harmony and stability, and predators are reducing diversity. Indeed, biodiversity and its maintenance is a central conservation imperative.

5.11 Biodiversity (theme 3)

The responses in this section came from the questions; “What do you think biodiversity is? What does it mean to you?” Some of my informants understood biodiversity as the whole range of everything that is. More specifically one informant said biodiversity was the range of things that have evolved together; what was naturally there. This could be a lot of things or just a few; some may have arrived recently and some not. Another informant did not like the word because in parallel with the words nature and ecosystems, it was thought to cover everything. He suggested this just creates confusion (theme 3). Another problem identified with defining biodiversity was that it is not static, but constantly evolving:

John- “I mean biodiversity is constantly evolving so that’s the problem, you can’t say that there is one particular state... So if you try to maintain the biodiversity of a country, what are you doing, are you pickingwell, I think what happens is that you pick a particular point and time and say everything that was alive ‘then’ is the biodiversity, and we will list it all and we will maintain them. Whereas there would be natural extinctions and natural, um, influxes, and by natural I mean uninfluenced by humans. Which, isn’t quite right because humans are natural, but you know, we figure that out.....um and yeah, so biodiversity is like a snapshot of what is available at a particular moment in time, but it can change very rapidly.”

Another informant suggested that as far as biodiversity is concerned all human interference is unnatural. This suggestion implies that humans are not part of biodiversity or evolutionary processes:

Jane - “Things change anyway I suppose. But you can minimise the interference you have then anything that happens will be a natural process. And nature decides what it keeps and what it gets rid of. If you can do that, then biodiversity is not really an issue, because, you know, if it is meant to go it is meant to go.You

could spend a lot of money, and a lot of time keeping things alive, but they if they are never ever released into the wild again, like, and if you, produce, maintain an animal for a long, long time and released it again knowing it was going to die, there is no point in doing it.”

Here change is inevitable, and nature should ‘decide’ the biodiversity of the planet. There is no point saving biodiversity if the creatures are merely to remain domesticated.

5.12 Sponsorship and endangered species management

A core theme of the forgoing section is an understanding that depicts nature as an object (theme 2) through an emphasis on its scientific definition. Related to this is confusion about human’s role with the natural world (theme 3). This ‘objectification’ is extended to treating endangered species as commercial resources (theme 2). The question asked for this section was: “What do you think about the commercialisation (sponsorship) of endangered bird management?”

5.12.1 Money for conservation

All my informants suggested that the money injected into conservation work through sponsorship was a good thing:

Bob - “....I welcome any company that is willing to put money into conservation. And for one because I see that we need it, you know, we need that money because we need to get things done.”

It allowed DoC to do extra things that it otherwise might not do. Two informants said they would rather see the sponsorship money spent on conservation rather than sport, etc.:

Frank - “.....I can think of a lot worse things to um, for big business to be sponsoring, ha. (yeah), i.e., possibly boxing matches, ha ha, (Americas cup), Americas cup, well there you go. Did you see the red socks here?..... ha ha, I hope you didn’t.”

Sponsorship was also seen as helpful in increasing the media profile of conservation work:

Frank - "So all in all it's [sponsorship] probably quite a good thing. And it's all, because they are trying to publicise themselves, and they align themselves with the project, well that all helps to keep it in the media and keep it in the face of the public too."

However, several informants said it also produced a lot more work. This was mainly involved in attempting to get sponsorship and talking to the media about it.

A tension was recognised by most of the informants between sponsorship by commercial interests and the goals of conservation. This was focused on suspicion about the sponsor's motivations:

Jane - "...as far as conservation goes, money is money, so its good, and ----- [sponsors] aren't endangering the birds at any stage. So it is just a bit of a window shopping exercise really. They are seen to be helping out this endangered species but they don't actually do anything, they just supply the money so conservation can do it. But I'm not against it at all, I'm more, the more money that comes in the better."

Sponsors, according to the informants, give money to do good, and feel good, and also for exposure to public and media. Indeed, many felt that sponsorship was an attempt to develop a 'green' profile by industrial companies, or to 'clear their conscience'. It was suggested that it was also a tax dodge for them. One informant labeled large industrial companies as 'ecobastards', and another suggested that sponsorship money was 'dirty money'. Sponsorship then, involved an uneasy partnership, because the money helps conservation, but its origins may not be 'pure'. However, all my informants still saw sponsorship as acceptable. There is certainly the possibility of personal interests being part of this acceptance, as for some of the informants it was sponsorship money that paid their wages.

In contrast, several informants also expressed a less cynical position:

Kylie- "You can be cynical about -----, but the fact remains that they have put their money where their mouth is, and that's important. And it's, it's really good to see

that commercial sector, um, or people within the commercial sector see it as a good thing to do. 'Cause they could easily go and spend it on a formula one racing person, or something. So, you know, and they would get more publicity, and probably, get to at least a, as wider.... consumers, that's right."

None of the informants were radical environmentalists in that they wanted to see the current political and economic system completely overturned. They had pragmatic rather than idealistic concerns and accepted the sociopolitical conditions within which they had to carry out their work. One informant encapsulated this situation by saying that commercialisation is a 'fact of reality'; the way the world works, and that some compromise is required by conservationists. Indeed, within the context of commercialisation, any links made by the informants between the continuing expansionism and destructive practices of consumption based capitalism and the loss of species, was downplayed (theme 4). One informant reasoned in the following manner:

Bob - "...they [businesses] do it- One, to feel good - Two, to make money. Or the other way round there's A and B possibly. One's not necessarily better than two. Um, so they do it to feel good and do good. And they do it to be seen to be doing good so therefore, their product, aww people go I will buy their product instead of this other product. That's fine, and if that increases their profits, you know, ideally that gives them more money to put back into conservation. Or not necessarily conservation but more money back into a healthier environment."

Another felt that people had more positive feelings towards business than government:

Kylie - "I think it is good, I think in some ways it [business] takes it out to the people more. They have a sense of ownership, whereas, um, bureaucracies and governments, also they are actually, um, for the people, by the people, they are often actually seen as, um, huge bureaucratic institutions and there's quite a bit of negative feeling about things. Whereas private sector, I think people generally feel quite positive about, for some reason..."

5.12.2 Why sponsorship is occurring (theme 2)

The question for this section was; “Why do you think this commercialisation is happening?” There were several reasons given for why endangered species were being sponsored. One was that government cost cutting has required it:

Steve - “...it is a way of getting money. And what comes first is to try and save these species, from my point of view, and if the government can't come up with all the funds, then we have got to go with the commercial.”

Government cost cutting was linked by one informant to political changes that have occurred since 1984, which produced different methods of money distribution to government activities (e.g., the privatisation of previously State run activities and cost recovery regimes for government departments). It was also seen as a known (implying acceptable) way of funding projects. Two informants suggested that conservation was ‘fashionable’ at the moment so it had access to sponsorship money:

Kylie - “..because the reality is too, conservation is fashionable now but there is no guarantee that it will be in 5 or 10 years, in fact, you know, that could go quite the opposite, particularly if, if the country does come in for hard economic times. I don't know if it would weigh as such a priority, and, and also if it's not fashionable - conservation is the sort of thing that could actually become very unfashionable. So yeah, I think that it is really important that every dollar we have now goes as far as it can, um, to um, safeguard those birds for the future.”

In contrast, another informant suggested that there was presently less sponsorship than in the past as conservation was considered a luxury. The implication here is nature as a subset of social (theme 2):

Bob - “In reality there is actually a bit of a tailing off of commercial sponsorship these days. Um, times is a little bit harder, so people um, yeah, that the reality of conservation as a luxury really. Like if we really had to um, watch our national budget, conservation is always going to be one of the first ones to go. At this stage of our mental and social processes, I don't believe it should be, I believe it should

be one of the last ones because in the long run it means we will have a healthier community.”

5.12.3 The necessity of endangered species for conservation

From the preceding discussion a question arises about the relationship between the sponsorship of endangered species and the role endangered species play in conservation generally. That commercial money is put into species management suggests their relatively high status at a social level. Indeed, one of my informants suggested that endangered species act as icons for conservation and that it was good to have cute species to conserve, as people will give money to save them. Society puts effort into what people are interested in. Without endangered species to save conservation might lack a focus. Also, several of my informants suggested that the media profile of endangered species was important and another suggested that ‘personalities’ of animals should be brought more to the fore (theme 1):

John - “Well, its only at the social level the individual species is more important. ‘Cause, it gives them something, the flagship, sort of thing, you can focus on it (Is an icon), yeah so the icon, start off with the Black Robin and now you have got the Kakapo and people are knowing more about the Kokako, and you know, I suppose Kaka as well and so, yeah, so you need species people relate to that you know really rise the profile of conservation (like Whales and Pandas..), yeah so people are more accepting of money being spent on conservation.”

Saving species near the brink, the Kakapo, the Black Robin, and the search for the South Island Kokako - these stories are central to conservation in New Zealand. Here John implies that conservation involves making nature compatible with social imperatives, and in particular, commercial ones (theme 2). There were benefits, however, to having endangered species as icons:

John - “..... so the whole umm, attitude to conservation probably raised by having some key individual species, which then has a flow on effect to other projects that are able to be done that are less popular, but just as important for ecosystems, and plants.”

5.13 Social influences in saving species (theme 5)

For many informants a species becoming extinct involves a sense of loss. Losing them would mean not having them for future generations. Such a loss or extinction was referred to by three informants as being akin to a death:

John - "...and I suppose its the romantic notion of saving something that is on the brink of death."

This sense of loss has close connections with conservation involving saving things. We are saving things for emotional reasons (theme 5):

Kylie - "And on a social level,...um...I don't know, I think that, yeah, part of people dies when you lose a species. I mean, I just feel mortified whenever I think of the beautiful Huia, and how they are now extinct. Is, there is a real sense of loss, um, of not knowing, of interest, of curiosity, and I think, yeah I don't know, I think that is wide spread. I don't know, it's like anything that's rare and becomes precious. And this, yeah, this wildlife is no different.....it's quite sad, and that's funny again because it's not, not coming from a scientific viewpoint, it's just an emotional, very much emotional one."

Here the Huia still exists, like the South Island Kokako, as a powerful symbolic phenomenon. This has importance in guiding ongoing conservation actions.

Saving species was seen by one informant as an act of putting care and goodness into the world:

Bob - "We have put goodness out there as well, which I think floats around for a long time, you know. And that's, sort of a world vibe philosophy, sort of thing, you know. And I think by generating, um, well you know, goodness, and a good attitude and a good feeling, or trying to do good, has far reaching and long lasting effects as well. Which will go well beyond my death, as a human."

Saving species was also understood to involve a moral obligation that humans have to the natural world:

Kylie - "...I think for most people it is the feel good thing. We have a moral obligation, I think that is part of our society, the way we are programmed. Yeah, there is moral obligation, but also, I mean it is more than just nationally it is internationally, as responsible citizens of the world community."

The influence of the social on the individual is recognised here. So is the taking of individual responsibility for our actions. Many informants recognised that social reasons for saving endangered species are just as important as ecological ones (theme 5):

Steve - "I think we should look also at the human side of it, the social side of it. In other words we have got to put weight on certain endangered species in my opinion. And that weight should be on the most intelligent, interesting, and visible, perhaps in terms of the ecosystem, useful species. I think that, to my mind, you know the South Island kokako, is far more important than a confounded blimmin tiny little plant that's admittedly getting very endangered on Farewell spit, or something like that."

5.14 Motives for work (theme 3)

The importance of the social that is implicit in the foregoing was downplayed when my informants were asked why they were involved in conservation work. Some saw it, in quite fatalistic terms that were linked to their own personal history. Frank said:

".....that came out as I spent more and more time in the scrub, so to speak. And, yeah, the different contacts you make around the place, and you just slowly built up a picture I think..... your life has got to go down certain tracks and it's just like a, it felt comfortable to be doing that really."

Another implied they were caught up in wider social concerns:

Jane - "Why are we doing it?...Well, again it goes back to what the public wants I suppose, if there is no public interest in saving something, if no-one wanted to do it, it wouldn't be done."

However, the majority implied that it was a definite conscious decision to dedicate their life to conservation. My informants did not overtly link capitalism, consumerism with the present need for conservation, or indeed, link the present socio-political situation with an understanding of their motivation for the work, or their dedication to it. In this sense they did not seem to connect their motives, as historical beings and individuals, to a wider social and historical setting. Some did, however, recognise the historical contingency of their understandings (theme 2).

Most of my informants saw their work as something where they could be achieving something with their lives (personal fulfillment), doing something positive for other people and the 'world':

John- "You feel you are achieving something um, with your life, that could be long lasting and invaluable to, not just people, but to the world in general....,but also because of the lifestyle, and because I enjoy myself doing the work. So I'm, physically and mentally um, rewarded by the work I do."

The lifestyle involved was seen as important. All the informants enjoyed living and working in the outdoors and on islands (theme 7):

Bob - "I think just the world of wildlife management, um, particularly, you know, I like working in remote spots, I think, it is just a magic world and it can offer a lot of different experiences and, I get what I need from it."

There is also the factor of a sense of individual belonging. Working on islands in particular involves working within a small community of people who share related experiences and common interests (theme 4). There is mutual support for developing understandings. All informants expressed a sense of doing the right thing. In this sense, conservation has an aspect of righteousness about it that at times was expressed as an intensely felt commitment:

Bob - "But I obviously feel strongly, to be environmentally sound and have less impact as possible is a good view point. And in reality I'm willing to die for it, you know. So yeah, I believe in it."

5.15 Intrinsic value

The concept of the 'intrinsic value' of nature is used in Conservation legislation, and I was interested to see how my informants, who work under that legislation, understood it. Broadly, intrinsic value can be described as all things (nature) having value in themselves rather than having a value that is placed onto them by human valuers. One informant related it to romanticism (theme 5):

Kylie - "I mean, Janet, you know, accuses me of being um, um, romantic, some of my notions, or my understanding of conservation, um ...but I think that is what intrinsicness is about, intrinsic... intrinsic value is a romantic value."

Given that several informants expressed 'romantic' understandings it was surprising that generally there was much confusion over the meaning of intrinsic value. Several informants were concerned if they had got the right definition (i.e., they were unsure of their own definition). Another had a problem with his argument, but let it sit that way. Still another refused to answer the question as they said they did not understand it. Finally, for one informant, expressing it verbally was a problem (theme 3):

Frank - "Yeah, I know what it [intrinsic value] means, I know what it means, but I another thing to put it into words."

There was a wide range of understandings of the meaning of intrinsic value. Most of my informants interpreted it as involving the allocation of value to things by humans. Several informants suggested that it should only be 'allocated' to indigenous species, which is how it can be interpreted in Conservation legislation. Others based it on individual subjective preferences (theme 2):

Kylie - "Intrinsic value, I guess it is one that is hard to measure. The value of

something, that, that, that's difficult to measure, or is difficult to quantify. It's qualitative rather than quantitative, yeah.

Me - "So does everything have intrinsic value?"

Kylie - "Does everything have intrinsic value?.... Yeah, well, I guess, intrinsic.....it in some way, yeah, it must be a personalised thing as well. Um, because it's how people, I think it is how people feel about things, their intrinsicness. So, yeah, it probably does, everything probably does have intrinsic value, to someone."

The qualitative aspect of intrinsic value is brought out here and the emphasis of saving what people want saved. How rare a species is, and its distinctiveness, was another approach taken. Implicit in this is that species have more intrinsic value than individuals. Another informant felt that intrinsic value was the value of something being there regardless of whether people get to see it or not. This is usually called existence value. Closer to the standard meaning one informant suggested that intrinsic value is value without influence, everything has its own way to be. Everything has a right to its own intrinsic value, its own character and way of life. The difficulty here is that 'rights' are allocated.

Given that intrinsic value is difficult to define and can be widely interpreted, its usefulness for conservation could be questioned. This of course depended upon what each informant thought it meant, so it is difficult to be clear about this. However, some said it was good because of the difficulty of being clear about what it means, it is an open ended word. In contrast one informant thought it was not very useful because it can be widely interpreted, and ambiguous. They did not see it as a particularly scientific term for use in management:

Jane - "on a, like a purely scientific, you are not actually defining what that means. Intrinsic value, whyintrinsic value, why not something more specific. (Like indigenousness?) Yeah, or ummm..... endemicity, finding all the ones that are not found anywhere else, saving them. And not worrying about Kingfishers, because they know that, aww kingfishers are natives aren't they? They got here themselves (yeah...). You don't really see anyone spending money on them. Because they are found in Aussie as well. So yeah, spending money on...the rarer ones, the more distinct, the more iconish."

Here money is seen as a measure of cultural importance and value as purely socially allocated (theme 2). This brings in the question of what other informants thought about what does or does not have intrinsic value. Some informants found it difficult to give some things intrinsic value and not others:

John - "O god....mmmm (you used it before. [intrinsic value])...yeah, aww did I, ha ha. Now I have to define what I meant. Umm, yeah, it's, I suppose what you are saying is that, everything has a value. Umm, to itself and to the world,aww god.....(It is an interesting term because it is used a lot in conservation policy, in New Zealand) yeah, Does anyone ever define it? (Well...) Don't tell me...I suppose it's saying, it has a right to be, so the intrinsic value of the Kakapo is that, it's evolved and it's there, and it's a being and it is has a right to be. Umm, and by being it contributes something to the world, umm, which we then perceive as something worth having, Yeah, we are just saying that because it is alive and it is there, um, it has value."

Me - "So given that criteria, does a possum or a rat have less intrinsic value than a Kakapo?"

John - "Mmm, ok, good question. Ok then what you are saying is that its intrinsic value is its contribution to nature as we have already defined it. And that nature being the ecosystem that was in um, that was there prior to the arrival of Europeans, so within New Zealand the intrinsic value of a rat is bugger all. But maybe on an island where that rat was native and an original inhabitant its intrinsic value would be very high, so yeah. (So it comes back to it's indigenouness, it's native state?), What we have defined as the natural state, yeah, so yeah, we have defined what our um, goal, or our valuable state is and it's whether it belongs in that or not, then defines its intrinsic value. And probably how much we like it too, even a native rat on its native island probably is considered to have less intrinsic value than a big fluffy mammal or a very pretty looking bird."

In this case John's original definition involved both value in being (existence) and value in naturally evolving here (indigenouness) which implied all things have at least some intrinsic value. The second definition downplays existence and emphasises indigenouness.

Finally he moves to subjective aesthetic preferences, avoiding the problem of intrinsic value in being all together and highlighting the allocation of values (themes 2, 3).

One informant, bringing out some recurrent themes further developed the theme of intrinsic value in indigeniousness. Here, pests damage intrinsic value of ecosystems by not allowing themselves to be easily accommodated into the present ecosystems. However, in time they would, as a new ecology would develop. Implicit in this is that pests would then gain intrinsic value:

Me - “....do rats and possums have intrinsic value in New Zealand?”

Bob - “Hah, ha, arr... You know, that’s, that’s, definitely on my arguments you could say in a way they do. Umm, but, not in the sense that um, their, they damage in the intrinsic value um, an ecosystem too greatly they don’t allow themselves to be accommodated easily into the environment. The intrinsic value of the environment here can’t handle it..... Ok, it’s too fragile. And, um, in that sense, I mean, over time, they would. There would become a new balance, (a new ecology), a new ecology. Now where we had an opportunity to maintain the old ecology and therefore, yeah, and therefore the intrinsicness of, um, New Zealand or these places.”

This is an ecocentric position, where ultimate value lies in the ecosystem. Wrapped up in this static view of nature (i.e., maintaining the old ecology) there is an acceptance of inevitable change:

Bob - “....to truly follow my argument through, you could say that they could have an intrinsic right to be here, um, and over time they will just, end up being a new balance, and that we are trying to create ourselves, but need to accept the baggage we have brought, and accept that it is still in some aspects, fixable. And if it is fixable, let’s fix it. You know, its like if you are traveling with and old suitcase you don't necessarily have to go buy a new one, you can patch it up, sew it up, make it pretty good. We can still do that, and you know you are saving resources by doing so I think, we have a, we have responsibility to make our transition into this ecosystem, as smooth as possible. And that involves the things we brought with us.”

A question is whether the original ecosystem ostensibly exists for us to make a transition into and what end a 'smooth transition' intends. There are limits to what can be fixed:

Bob - ".... I think we have to accept that we are here, and we are not going to get everyone out of here, so we can't let the place, we can't restore or preserve New Zealand."

Here, the change in ecosystems involves a loss of identity. It is 'New Zealand', not just species that is being lost. However, humans belong here too as all 'animals' arrived at some stage, it doesn't matter how long ago. Indeed, we should see ourselves as being part of nature, as not being separate:

Bob - " And an answer has to be, and our answer was in the early days, this is in the early days, like way early days. Um, we were part of nature. OK, that's where the answer is, so we can't keep alienating ourselves from it. Otherwise we are saying we're God, and we are not."

Here humans being separate from nature allows them to conceive themselves as 'God', and as having a right to order and control the natural world. It highlights a tension between humans being part of nature and of being separate. If humans are considered part of nature, as suggested in an ecological understanding, it is difficult to support the notion that introduced species may not have intrinsic value. It is this difficulty that leads to the need to fall back to intrinsic value as an allocated social value (themes 2, 3).

Although intrinsic value is an idea that is used in conservation legislation, from my limited investigations the people who work under that legislation show little consensus over what it means. Intrinsic value was generally interpreted in anthropocentric terms (i.e., as worth allocated to the world by humans), despite the fact that this is not the intention under its formal definition. The foregoing indicates that there is considerable confusion about the idea (theme 3).

5.16 Tracing Nature

The confusion implicated in the idea of intrinsic value also existed with the notion of nature. This section considers this, and is based upon the question; “What do you think nature is?” One meaning of the word, ‘nature’ makes reference to something’s intrinsic state (e.g., human nature):

Kylie - “...I guess it is how we are genetically made up, and how we, and how we are made up. Just genetics, ha ha .Yeah, and how we fit into our surroundings, I guess that’s nature.”

Here humans are conceived as being part of nature. Indeed, several informants agreed that nature was everything and everywhere:

Bob - “Aww, nature.....Nature is everything, Universe, nature is, arr, a computer is natural, is nature. Everything is nature. That’s it! (The world is nature) Well, it is, we are natural, we are part of nature, everything we make is part of nature. You know, we need to shape nature to make, to meet, minimal impacting goals, to have a smoother ride I suppose. For everything that is around us and for ourselves, as a species. Um, but everything we do is still nature, I strongly view that.”

The difficulty in defining nature was expressed by one informant who highlighted an inability to be clear about what nature is:

Steve - “For me everything is actually nature, but whether you use that word, whether you think in terms like that, I don’t know whether it that is important. I mean you could give it a completely other name, you could call it philosophy for instance, just as matter of interest, everything is really probably philosophy, some would say too, religion is another good word.”

Here nature can be grouped with other symbols that point towards the ineffable (theme 6):

Steve - “Well everything is really nature, I think. Our nature first, when you understand your own self.”

The reflexivity invoked in the 'self' understanding itself recursively leads to nature as something fundamentally undefinable (i.e., cannot understand one's 'own self'). However, another approach was the incisive dichotomy in which nature is the non-human world:

Frank - "I guess you think of nature possibly when you are a little bit a,
.....something in its left alone state, not tampered with."

Another suggested that definitions of nature were culturally derived. Using a European derived definition meant that what is natural is the pre-European state of a place. So native (indigenous) people are considered part of nature. This links to pre-modern symbolic immersion and modern representational thought as discussed in the chapter 2. Things before European arrival are natural and Europeans are not seen as having communion with nature:

John - "Yeah, this is I think definitely Europeans are seen as um, having no communion with nature whatsoever. And that in indigenous people have, and I don't actually agree with that, I think that people in general will modify the environment wherever they go to suit themselves. And it doesn't matter if you were there 40 million years ago, or 200 years ago. Um, anywhere that humans have been, has been modified by humans, the problem is that humans are actually natural. So what we do is actually natural, so you could say that the state of New Zealand at this exact point in time is 100% natural, and you know, there we go. So what we, what we are tending to say is natural, is anything that has.....if you can take away the impact of humans, that is natural. If you can take away the Europeans, then that is the natural that we are going to try and achieve. I think Europeans are as seen as the villains, and anything before that is natural."

The understanding that implies society is separate from nature (theme 2) created a tension, as most informants support ecological holism and inter-relatedness:

Bob - "We are part of nature, you know. Yeah, so I take a holistic approach and want to include, um, you might have got it from some of my other answers, that we need to be a part of nature."

Here we are both part and not part of nature. The human/nature distinction could be considered to be a pseudo-distinction, one that is used in people's talk and in their actions and taken as a social given (theme 4). It is a symbol whose definition cannot be made clear. One informant refers to intuition when rational explanation becomes inconsistent, or in this case, when it becomes inadequate (theme 5). In the quotation below humans are just another species, and our long term impact is minimal, so the question arises as to the point of doing anything:

Bob - "because then the problems we are talking about are our problems, and our species' lifetime, because ultimately the world is gonna rectify itself anyway. The impact of us is going to be ending up very minimal. So, the real answer to us is to become in tune with it, and accept, accept that we are animals."

Later he again emphasised intuition and being in tune with nature as a guide for how to act (theme 5);

Bob - "I believe, a large part of this work is natural intuition and ya, how you harmonise with it, and communicate with it, and feel it and so forth."

The other approach is to conceive humans as physically natural but possessing higher mental faculties, which transcend 'nature'. This links with informants who described a stronger separation between nature and humans. It follows the classical emphasis on human rationality separating humans from other living things. Humans can affect it positively and negatively, so it consequently becomes an ethical question that involves a distinction between natural and unnatural human acts.

Next, I was interested in what 'wildness' meant to my informants and how nature and wildness might be related.

5.17 Tracing wildness

The questions asked for this section were; “What do you think wildness is? Why do think this? What isn’t wild?” and, “Do you think wildness is important?” Like ‘nature’, notions of what wildness is varied among my informants:

John - “...’cause you can say humans are nature, humans are natural. But wildness excludes humans I think. So what I think of as wild is where humans have not had an effect, or are not sort of managing or changing the environment.”

A common theme was that wildness existed when there was no human influence; or as wildness involving a continuum of decreasing influence. Domestication (e.g., a zoo) takes wildness away. Wildness is something we have no control over:

Frank - “If you talk about wilderness, wilderness to me is when you go back into the back blocks. But wildness is something that tends to happen around you, and yeah, there is, there is wildness around here. ???, um. (So wildness is some sort of adversity?), yeah, it seems to be almost. I don’t know if it is necessarily adversity, but it’s um, it not even ??, it’s, it’s just here. Wildness, like in terms of the weather to me, it’s something that we have no control over, I suppose. Wildness, isn’t it, we don’t have control over it, and I mean the ocean and the winds, are something you don’t have any control over.”

Wildness is just ‘here’, while wilderness designates certain places. Frank also suggested that “wildness is not a phenomena [sic]”, as in some form of physical state (theme 5).

Another informant intuited such as order as a harmony and balance in places they thought were wild. The idea that wildness is just ‘here’ was revealed by another informant in a different way:

Bob - “A Yellow eyed penguin, who might walk up that beach shortly, is wild and free. He knows nothing about wildness and um, that’s what makes very much what perhaps what we might view a simple outlook on life. Pretty f**ken special. And, um that’s where we are often very out of tune. You know, in the sense of, so you know, um conserving wildness. In the sense of preserving a wild environment is, is

one, basically, just being there, so we know there is a bit of, bit of, rampaging nature, just doing its thing.”

Here wildness is understood as involving an unreflective state, just ‘being in the world’ without self-awareness (theme 6). He also conveys an association between wildness and freedom, hence autonomy. The idea of wildness as just ‘being there’, which interestingly is the English translation of *Dasein*, also suggests that people may also be wild. Here wildness is an aspect of our immersion. Indeed, one informant suggested a person they knew epitomised wildness; another that certain people or aspects of people were wild:

Kylie - “Some people in the community are. Yeah [wild], but for the most part, um, Yeah, um, yeah, some people are wild. I think people who follow their desires, are wild people. Yeah, people who have a dream or a vision, something they want to do and do it. I think they are quite wild people. But for most of us we are very much, um,arr, almost constrained or inhibited, by the greater community.So it’s not about whether you grow your hair long or eat bean sprouts, because, yeah a lot of people who do that are not actually very wild, because they are doing it because everyone else is.It does mean that they are not wild people if that is something that they feel and want and need.”

This implies a link between nature and humans that is not directly biological. In addition, it implies wildness is not something derived directly from the social, but that lies in emotions and desires. Wildness is about feelings; it is something you feel:

Bob - “Wildness is one of the most powerful things you can feel, I’m sure of it. And, um, because it is very, um, very old. It comes down through a huge number of ancestors to us, you know. And, um, you know, by creatures having wildness, it lets a huge array of trees and animals just um, have, feel that wildness just as much as they can, and um, and one of the easiest ways we know of feeling our wildness, well one’s probably huge sexual passion, two, um, is putting ourselves in what we call a wild setting. So wildness is all around us. And you can quite easily go into that setting and if you are not in right frame of mind you won’t even feel wildness. So, within, and it’s a real powerful thing, from within.”

So wildness is both within us, and also outside us; the uncontrollable things. It is also something that can be found through reflection but is not reflective itself. Natural wildness within us is often suppressed, many never get to see it, or recognise it.

Several of my informants also suggested that there were also various types of wildness. One said there were various amounts of wildness in poetry and music and 'ecological wildness'. Developing distinctions between different types of wildness was used to address the problem of wild animals (e.g., rats) versus indigenous animals (e.g., Kakapo). One informant defined 'natural wild' (wild animals not introduced by humans), and 'introduced wild' (animals introduced by humans). Here 'natural wild' animals are integrated into ecosystems, while introduced wild are not.

One informant expressed the importance of wildness (theme 6):

Jane - "You couldn't live in an ordered world, that would be, depressing. Everything in a cage, would you rather see something in a zoo or, you know, just be lucky to see it in the wild. I think I would rather, you know, spend 10 times, 100 times, longer in the bush hoping to see a Kakapo jump out than if I went to a museum, or a zoo and had a 1/10 chance in seeing it. It's just, well, it's just sort of cruel, having things, in like gardens and things. It's all well and good, it's just not as it is supposed to be."

For Jane, things are 'supposed' to be wild. This implies wildness is a natural order of things. Also implied here is that wildness is chaotic; as being disorderly and beyond human control. Perhaps nature is in humans as wildness, not just as a biological physical expression, but in some pre-reflective, instinctual, and emotional form. Another aspect that I think is revealed in the preceding discussion is that what wildness is, and where it resides, is something that cannot be easily traced. Like nature, wildness is a term that is widely used, and as such, its meaning (or meanings) is largely 'taken for granted' and so never made completely clear:

Steve - "How do you mean wildness? (Well, ok), what do you mean by wildness? (I'm asking you). Well I don't know what you mean by the question! Is the middle of Bhutan wildness? (I don't know, do you think it is?). Well, I don't

like that word wildness, because I don't really understand what you're meaning by it. Remoteness, I understand, if you were talking about remoteness I would be able to answer, but...What actually do you mean by wildness?"

Such indeterminacy is possibly the term's most important aspect. For my informants, nature and wildness are important, but also perplexing, symbols. Attempting to trace their meanings forces logical conundrums and a questioning as to what they are trying to achieve as far as endangered species management is concerned (theme 3). They pushed into regions that cannot be spoken of directly but are nevertheless central to their work. Notions like, the 'chaotic', 'passion', 'feelings', 'desire', the 'good' and the 'uncontrolled' (theme 5). Wildness is a complex concept. The central thread, however, is the idea of autonomy, for both individuals and nature generally.

5.18 Kakapo and wildness

My informants were asked whether they thought Kakapo were wild in their present situation:

John - "Not on this island, I don't think they [Kakapo] are wild at all. Because they have been taken from where they were living, they have been moved to an island and they have been.....I suppose it comes down to the amount of management that going on with them. And the fact that we know basically almost exactly where they are, um, where they have been, what they have been eating. Because the human influence is so great I don't think they are wild, they are not tame, but they are somewhere in between..... So I think they have lost their wildness, as long as they're still carrying their transmitters. I would call them wild, if we got a group of twenty and put them on an island and left them to it. Yeah, I would say they are wild again."

The more sophisticated notions of wildness developed in the previous section are not used here, as the wildness (or not) of Kakapo was equated directly to the amount of human intrusion involved. Human conservation actions were not wild but always involved some form of oppression of it (theme 3). Another informant saw animals' uncoerced interaction with humans as wild:

Steve - "Before the intensive management strategies were put in place for Kakapo, right you would talk about them as much more wild then. Now they are getting hand fed, they come into trays to get their supplementary feed, so some of the wildness has been taken out. But that means there will be behavioural changes in Kakapo as well of course. Um, the Wekas at our camp for instance, now how wild are they, they know exactly where humans are around to get crumbs from. But then again that is quite a natural kind of wildness with Weka really in a way, isn't it."

The Weka's wildness comes by the Weka's 'free choice', their interaction with humans is uncoerced and the birds retain their autonomy, unlike Kakapo who are trained to feed at feed stations. Here wildness is associated with freewill, so Weka interact with humans as part of their nature, Kakapo by contrast, are trained and controlled. So wildness varies with species, which brings up the question of it also varying between individual animals:

Bob - "So I think they are still quite wild, um they have a reasonable amount of human contact, um whichI think they view as part of the world they live in and they deal with it. The way they deal with it, either, one, by running away, two, by falling asleep, the way their individual wildness teaches them to deal with it. Now if they were five generations, or three generations in a zoo, in a cage. It would be quite a different scenario, that instinctive wildness would be getting reduced and modified. Um, but, no I'd say we arr, we have these Kakapo in new locations and new habitats, but I think they guided by their wild nature."

When the individuals interact with humans it invokes behavioural changes, so they lose their wildness. Here it is the individuals that 'have' wildness not the species. This highlights difficulty in tracing it (theme 6).

By keeping Kakapo on offshore islands DoC are trying to retain their wildness, since they could do species recovery in a zoo. However, Kakapo do not respond well to captivity:

Kylie - "Yeah, Kakapo, yeah, are quite interesting...sort of lucky in a lot ways. Because of the way they are, they don't...take to management much more than they

are, well we don't believe they do. How, birds that have been taken into captivity into the past have died. Yeah, yeah, otherwise there would be a lot more intensive captive stuff, yeah. And so that...so these ones died, and so we said we can't do it that way. And so the managers have been forced to, take the tack from the other angle. Because they are so rare, um, they can't afford for any to die, so they have sort of had a hands off, softly, softly approach. You know, it's only as, maybe as we become confident ... that management's becoming more intensive. So, yeah, so Kakapo are quite lucky.... also too, that [there]is some really visionary people in the department, yeah, who understand wildness and um, the importance of it."

This suggests there has been an attempt to retain wildness in management (theme 6). This is done partly through the use of technology, which allows less intrusive management techniques:

Kylie - "I think , I guess on a scale of one to ten the Kakapo, of wildness. Ten being really wild, and one being not that wild, probably an eight, yeah. Probably not bad, particularly for, for intensive of management, and for what you have seen. The idea is that they are, you know, the wild birds, get captured once a year, um, and other management that takes place on them is simply, and yeah that's for their transmitter change and health check, the other management is simply remote sensing for... Yeah, so definitely coming at it from the less intrusive angle, but we have the luxury of there being fifty birds and not five. Um, and to it's a bit sad because we are now realising, they...??..as been thought, thought in the past, so yeah management is becoming more in your face."

The less intrusive approach is used because it is a more efficient approach (i.e., Kakapo do not breed in captivity), in other words if more intrusive management worked, DoC would probably use it. This indicates less a concern with their wildness, than with the end of successful breeding. The prospect of loss overrides the Kakapo's wildness or autonomy. Another informant does not mind where or how endangered species are 'kept', and where they 'belong', as being part of the ecosystem is not central (theme 2):

Steve - "I think that intensive management is absolutely necessary in many cases. There was a lot of argument with Kakapo initially, but in fact we were wrong, people who thought that there shouldn't be intensive management with Kakapo were actually wrong with Kakapo. Intensive management was needed, now as you know, on Codfish island there is a lot of sophisticated electronics, and all sorts of ways to really be hands on the birds, so each individual Kakapo is looked after, rather than as a species as a whole. Now getting back to your question of wildness, that I guess could, in people's opinion, could remove wildness even further, where virtually every individual Kakapo is basically a pet, that is everything is being done for it. \$50,000 a pet, isn't it, it is a huge amount of money that is spent averaged on every Kakapo to try and save it and look after it. To make sure that itthat it breeds, exactly. So yeah ok, you have got to compromise, you have got to compromise in that situation."

He admits they are domesticated but that is a compromise that is required. Another informant said management became necessary:

Kylie - "...so early on in the programme, they were, they endeavored to leave the Kakapo on Stewart Island, but then that just wasn't, um, a viable thing to do. So they were moved here, with less interactive management with no transmitters, except for Tony tootling up the hill every so often to go and check and see if there are any track and bowl [breeding] activity. And it wasn't until 19--, yeah, the Rimu fruited, and there was lots of booming, lots of breeding, lots of nests, and then the fruiting failed, and the chicks, starved. That was when the intensive management happened."

In the longer term once the Kakapo population is high enough to be self-sustaining they become wild again:

Bob - "Self-sustaining means that we walk away, let them go, if we go back we are going back to a wild place, and we are going back and feeling the wildness of the Kakapo. 'Cause we hear them booming but we don't do anything for the Kakapo when we are there. We don't go and measure them or weight them. We don't go

and record the number of booms unless we just sort, just personally interested or something. They are just doing their thing and we just go to the place that they live. We don't do any management what so ever, and Kakapo evolve directly under their terms and under the terms of the environment that they are in, it dictates to them."

Here, wildness is linked to evolution so wildness resides in larger natural processes rather than in species or individuals (theme 6).

5.19 What should happen to the South Island kokako?

Most informants said that if the South island Kokako was found it should be managed in order to stop its extinction:

John - "They should spend a shit load of money saving it, yep. Well, I suppose there is a romantic side to the whole story, its extinct and if you found it, well you'd have to save it. It's like, well why look for it if you are not going to do something. And, yeah, and I suppose it's the romantic notion of saving something that is on the brink of death. Is you know, has appeal to everyone, really. (So you are saying not for scientific purposes but because of emotional or romantic reasons?) ...ha, yeah, yeah, absolutely. And, you know, the by-product is fantastic, it could be a very interesting thing to study and blah, blah, blah. Yeah, but people don't do, I don't think people save animals for that reason, they save it for the emotional, um, factor. The satisfaction.. yeah."

Saving the South island Kokako is for emotional reasons, not scientific ones. That is it is motivated by the romantic notion of saving something on the brink of death (theme 5).

Another informant said that they should be put on an island and bred. This involves removing them from where ever they are presently living. In addition another informant said that putting them somewhere where people can see them is a good conservation promotion. This again highlights the social aspect. Another informant saw a managed population as the best approach (theme 2):

Bob - "I really feel if we had the money, the access to the money for the next 60 years, we will get Stewart Island predator free. I think it is really important to do so, 'cause there is an awful lot we can do there, we can go, it's modified for sure, that's the best thing about it, we have f**ken already modified it. Which means can put, if we need to, we have got a huge amount of space that we can make safe, and we can put species that are safe nowhere else. We don't have to go aww, um, um, f**k this species never lived there, you know, it doesn't matter, we will put it there and it will be safe. You know, because we really are reasonably concerned about, you know, the security of species."

Here Stewart Island becomes a sanctuary where it does not matter if endangered species are put there that have not naturally evolved there because it has already been modified. Either way it is an artificial production. The contradiction is that a significant aspect of New Zealand conservation is its focus on the extermination of organisms put into places outside their natural range by humans. Bob's approach is to save diversity at all costs with the emphasis on the security of species. Bob also says that:

Bob - "You know, I think that would be, you know, if we had the situation where we got 4 or 5 males and one female, or no females. If that's what was discovered ... we put them here and we bring North Island kokako here, and breed with them. Yep well, apart from singing differently they will be the same anyway. Just do it, you know, whatever you get out of them, whatever genes you get out of them it is worth it. "

Here he is not interested in the individuals or the species but the genes. He is prepared to mongrelise the species. The question is whether this lies against 'natural' evolution or less so than 'wild' predators wiping it out.

In contrast to the above proposals, one informant thought that the South Island Kokako should be left alone (theme 6):

Kylie - "The poor things should be left alone to go extinct quietly. I don't know, no the more, the more (I thought your were serious then), the more, well no, I am a bit serious. Because certainly the more that I, I see of these intensive management

programs, the less I like them. Um, and that's, yeah, that's largely because they, um, yeah sort of destroy that wildness. I mean in some ways, if there was just a handful of South Island Kokako left, the decent and nice thing would be to just enjoy them how they were..... Yeah, I think the intensive management and, yeah, and something would be lost, but something would be gained too"

Me - "When you say ... by just letting it go extinct, something would be gained and something would be lost, what do you mean by what's going to be gained? "

Kylie - "Well, well ... I just sort of mean,um, be gained in that the last few ones to be left how they are. (ok), yeah, and I think there is a richness in that. Yeah, to be enjoyed or understood or seen. A sort of dignified death, if you know what I mean, instead of enslaved for a, for the next 30 years."

Interestingly, the notion of loss and death, that is frequently associated with species extinction by some informants, is resolved through it being allowed to occur in a dignified manner. This involved not intervening in this case. Another informant was unsure of what to do (theme 3):

Frank ".....No I don't know really. I mean there are two ways you, you could either say, ok we have found it, leave it alone. Or, manipulate it like they do everything else, which can be a bit spooky but,.....I don't know the best thing....."

5.20 The New Zealand public's conservation ethic

When asked about the New Zealand public's conservation ethic some informants said that they were unsure about its state. (A conservation ethic can be understood as a concern for the environment, which invokes an obligation of care). One informant said they could only comment on the local ethic. Another, that there was large individual variation in the environmental ethic (theme 2).

Some said that there was a good Conservation ethic in New Zealand. Indeed, New Zealand was ahead of most other countries in that, in general, New Zealand people were close to the land. Another thought it was improving, using the example of the Green party's political support in the previous election. Others, in contrast, thought it was poor. One cited an example of local whitebaiters just being after whatever money they could get

and showing little concern for conserving the fishery. Another said there was still room for improvement- particularly domestically. Still another suggested that a loss of experience of the natural world meant that the natural environment was of little importance to most New Zealanders (theme 7):

Jane - "Generally, I think to most people it [the conservation ethic] is not that important, at all. It's not impacting on their daily lives, so they just don't take notice of it. I can't see any reason why an unemployed person in south Auckland would take the slightest bit of notice of anything around them, at all. Living in an urban environment. People on the urban fringe maybe take a bit more, has a bit more impacts on them, but most people spend their daily lives and maybe see the natural environment once or twice a year. Like at Christmas or at Labour weekend (They don't have interaction with it so they just think...). Well, yeah, basically they don't interact."

From this perspective experience of the natural world is seen as being important for developing an environmental ethic (theme 7). Another informant suggested that spreading information and stories could cause a change in awareness (theme 1):

Kylie - "I think too,.....the more sort of information the community has ,.....they have got access to information, the world is shrinking, I guess, globalization (yeah). Um, you know the Internet, that's part of that. I think ,.....with the increasing levels of illnesses like cancer, um, I think it dawns on some of the community that... the environment we live in is so important to us...I think it is part of the, information, the community is becoming more sophisticated. And ... they are not just in isolation like they have been in the past. That the understanding, that the long term, yeah, a bigger community but also a bigger world. I think that has something to do with it, You know, people can see you just can't, keep, tipping (world as finite), it's finite, yeah."

However, this development of a global ecological consciousness has good and bad points. The Internet may develop more awareness of global issues and help reveal the finiteness of the world, but, as previously expressed by this informant, it has a counter effect of

reducing the direct experience of nature, and commodifying it (theme 7). Media coverage was also seen by one informant to affect the public conservation ethic. Media coverage both reflects public concern and raises it. He suggested that because media publicity for the environment has not been good enough, the ethic was decreasing.

So what do the informants think about wildlife management's effect on a public conservation ethic? One informant suggested that wildlife management does not itself invoke an ethic, but wildlife management comes from an underlying communal environmental ethic:

Jane - "Aww, might be the other way around. Conservation ethic sort of determines how we manage the wildlife, possibly."

Wildlife management was seen as having both negative and positive aspects, both making people see damage is being done and that we can "do something about it":

John - "Yeah people do keep an eye on what is happening with that [Kakapo], and they like to think that it is being saved. And without any effort on their part really. But them approving of it they sort of feel they made a contribution. So it's like a silent contributionAnd by this sort of tacit approval from the whole of the population, it is like this silent majority vote thing.... Someone who follows the Kakapo, will be more um, warm to the idea of conservation and if they are asked they will probably be more positive about it. And if they are more positive to other people around them, then this sort of warm tide can, can keep flowing around. (..and may affect lifestyles as well) Yeah, so they may have a consciousness about, all right, someone is saving the Kakapo, um, maybe I should recycle a bottle or whatever. I think, there is sort of a tide of conservation that is building and flowing through."

There is also a suggestion here that people give their approval to conservation merely to clear their consciences without having to be involved (themes 2, 7).

5.21 The treatment of individuals

Finally, the informants were asked about the treatment of individuals:

Kylie - “Yep, yep, you can’t do this work and not feel that. You know every time you band an Albatross chick it throws up, it’s just really unpleasant. Um, every time you’re grabbing a Kakapo, you know, its heart rate is th th th th th th th. Um, it’s unpleasant.... Every time we have a, I guess, a forced interaction with an animal, whether that be just sort of race up to its nest, and get the nest number, or you catch them with a band on them, or you stomach pump it, or, yeah, it’s just not good. I certainly feel that, the more work that I do, its, you know, its always, always there, I mean, sometimes its more graphic than other times. You know, when if a Skua gets an egg from the Albatross that we are banding, that’s really horrible, but it’s pretty horrible too when you grab them ... Yeah so I’m just really conscious of that. And when designing the work that I do, or any of the work I do... if I feel uncomfortable with it I just won’t do it. I feel that, most of the things they I’m involved in, all of the things I am involved in, and how I justify it and think about it is that ... those individuals, suffer, but the benefit of what we are doing, for the population is worth it. And if I can’t make that justification, I just won’t do it, I’m not into science just for science sake. Yeah, for me there has to be a direct measurable conservation benefit.”

Here ethical decisions involve personal judgments. These involve a mix of feelings and “direct measurable conservation benefits” (theme 5). However, as much as the previous discussion reveals, what ‘conservation benefits’ (beyond the simplistic conservation of the species) might be, and who or what is the beneficiary, is unclear.

Generally people involved are concerned about the animals’ welfare. They are doing their best with limited knowledge. One informant said that sometimes you have to accept the decisions made by others that may know more. As long as objections are listened to, it is all you can do without leaving the job (theme 4). This more pragmatic approach would suggest that the major difficulty is that we do not ultimately have the knowledge, but we have to make decisions anyway (themes 5, 6):

Steve - “We have got to make decisions, we have got to take short cuts, that’s what I’m saying yeah.”

Chapter 6

Discussion

"[T]he landscape is not inert; and it is precisely because it is alive that it eventually contradicts the imposition of a reality that does not derive from it."

(Lopez, 1986, p. 277)

6.1 Introduction and overview

This discussion will be concerned with both tracing links and exposing tensions between the current practices of endangered species management in New Zealand, and ritual. Central to this is the question of how certain narratives impinge upon endangered species management. In other words, what dominates my informant's understandings and practices. In addition, and reflecting the reconstructive aspect of this study, is the consideration of the possibilities for developing an alternative approach.

Nietzsche argues that nature sits as a horizon that cannot be interpreted. Due to this, "each normative engagement with wildness in nature remains paradoxical in the deepest possible way - because it attempts to identify that which cannot be identified" (Drenthen, 1999, p. 173). This exposes the difficulty that, in order to have an ethical relation to nature, humans need to interpret and conceptualise it. As has been developed in the theory sections under the notion of *reflexive symbolism*, the normative involves a conceptual or reflexive engagement, while our immersion leads this into a conceptual paradox.

I will begin the discussion by highlighting the form of this reflexive engagement. I will do so through discussing the second theme from the results. This emphasises an understanding of nature, as expressed by my informant's, that was based upon a metaphysics of presence (see Figure 6.1). This metaphysic involves, first, a scientific understanding that sets the ground through which things can show themselves. Second, and linked to the first, it highlights the placement of subjective values upon the natural world that are not necessarily derived from interaction. Both of these understandings grasp the natural world as an inert 'real' background upon which either facts are discovered or values applied. Such an understanding, I propose, allows the development of a controlling

position towards the natural world. The metaphysical position implicated in this engagement is bound up with broader social narratives. Such narratives involve a normative engagement with the natural world that is carried by these narratives as an ethic (*ethos*) and reflected in the informants' practices (theme 4). It is also reflected in how these practices and 'nature' are represented to the wider public (theme 1). I will trace how this metaphysic is expressed through a discussion of sponsorship, colonisation, stewardship and predator control.

This conceptually based form of engagement itself produces tensions and confusions in my informants' understandings (theme 3). I propose that these tensions are related to immersive limitations that do not allow my informants to conceptualise their position clearly. In addition, it leaves the paradox of an inability to identify nature incomplete. That is they recognise different interpretations of what nature might be, and consequently tensions in our relation with it but do not attribute aspects of this pluralism to nature itself.

An alternative engagement is one that considers our immersion. This in turn highlights wildness and ritual. In the latter half of the discussion I collect parts of my informants' discussion that I believe show traces of this as set out in the theory chapters. In this reconstructive part I reveal that such understandings lie implicit in my informants' discussion and practices. This draws together several of the themes from the results: These being my informant's understandings of different types of stories, their recognition of a broader epistemology and of wildness and the unknown (theme 5,6), and of the importance of experience (theme 7). Finally, I will conclude with a brief summary of the discussion and some recommendations.

Figure 6.1

Two engagements with nature

A. Metaphysics of presence (inert nature)

1. Nature as an object (conceptually based)
2. Valuing of nature from social allocation
3. Normative

B. Phenomenological (animated nature)

1. Mythological nature (perceptually based)
2. Valuing of nature based on experience (interactive)
3. Paradoxical

(Reflexive symbolism attempts to integrate these engagements)

6.2 Science and commodification

My informants felt that the high media interest in endangered species was important for conservation because it helped increase its social profile. Indeed, endangered species were understood to act as ‘icons’ for conservation, without which conservation might lack a media focus. In this respect endangered species become resources for conservation. Their high profile meant that endangered species were able to attract commercial sponsorship. My informants recognised that through the use of sponsorship the identity of endangered species, such as the Kakapo, risk becoming closely associated with consumer products. Because of this process there is a danger of endangered species becoming abstracted and subsumed into signs and technology. This supplants first hand experience of them and the natural world more generally. My informants also recognised a tension between economic expansion that included the commercialisation/ commodification of endangered species, and the preservation of nature that lay against

such expansion. They did not, however, see themselves as against sponsorship or the use of endangered species in this way.

Some informants felt this media identity should be informed largely by scientific understandings. Science was understood to enrich the way humans understand, and consequently, scientific descriptions of nature enhance it for people to experience. For many of my informants this interpretation involved the representational understanding of the nature of reality that is embodied in natural science. Some of my informants felt that another benefit of science was that it gave us the power to be able to manage nature. This is part of a conservation narrative focused on reducing damage to the earth and the loss of biodiversity, that in turn requires an expansion of scientific knowledge (Turner, 1996). For Kakapo, this involves ongoing research into their habits that requires external and internal identification, ongoing surveillance (telemetry of their location every few days) and feeding. This expansion of knowledge goes hand in hand with increasingly intensive management of the species. For some of my informants, nature's autonomy and encouraging interaction between people and wild places was secondary to the gathering of this knowledge. Finally, there was no explicit link made by my informants between such scientific knowledge, and the subsequent power it gives to humans, and the damage that it then intends to fix. This is in contrast to my informant's recognition of the tension between economic expansion and the preservation of nature mentioned in the previous paragraph. As such, there was no link made between the expansion of scientific knowledge and economic expansion.

This combination of science and media, I suggest, act in a complementary fashion with regards to the commodification of nature. This is because they create a situation with a mix of modern representational and mainstream postmodern understandings. This involves a double movement where the 'reality described' by modern science is rarely encountered fully first hand. Rather, it is passed on by the media, and in this it risks becoming subsumed into a social play of signs that in turn means the 'valuation' of nature becomes understood as being derived from a social pluralism. This understanding of nature as inert, and upon which social values are placed, then becomes a legitimate approach to interpreting the natural world. It also invokes a tension between separation and immersion where this interpretation by science and media brings nature 'closer' for those who have no or little day to day interaction, but at the same time distances it, as these representations become surrogates for first hand experience. With such a pre-interpretation, nature

becomes 'the environment'; an array of interacting objects 'out there', that is an unanimated nature; an ideological 'factual' one. This is in contrast to a mythological understanding of nature that highlights its autonomy as other and where values arise out of interaction with a natural world that is always already significant.

As has been suggested, this emphasis on the social meant that for my informants any variation in the identity of endangered species was derived from a social pluralism. Such social pluralism was understood by my informants to arise from a subjectively derived allocation of values. In this recognition of the pluralist nature of social valuing, conservation was understood as one cultural practice among many. It was thought of as being "fashionable" at present, so not a necessity, but one of many competing social concerns. Significantly, within this pluralist understanding, my informants as conservationists, felt that they knew what was most important; what endangered species 'are'. In addition to this, sponsorship was also seen as being a 'fact of reality'- of how things are. This I suggest exposes a lack of awareness of the social contingency in their *own* understandings, and so an acceptance of the present cultural and social institutions and the way of valuing the natural world derived from these institutions. This also exposes a limit to their reflexivity, which is not sufficient to recognise their own understandings as social and historical beings. This implies a symbolic immersion in the social world they live in. As such these understandings can be considered as ideological.

To summarise, I suggest that nature's open identity cannot be rendered through understanding it as an object to be discovered, or as an inert background onto which subjective values are applied. This is objectified as an inert nature that is consequently open to control and management. I suggest that it is the metaphysics that delineates nature as objects, which allows such an appropriation of the non-human world and complement the practically focused 'fixing' practices of preservationism such as endangered species management and pest control. Links to this can be drawn to what Chomsky (1993) described as the dominant theme of the history of the last five hundred years, western imperialism.

6.3 Colonisation

The modern *episteme* (see section 2.4.1) embraces a secular understanding that has a progressive view of knowledge. This, for example, justifies a colonialist programme assisting indigenous people in achieving 'cultural maturity' (Goldstein, 1999). The form

of this programme has changed from its less subtle 18th and 19th century forms of colonisation, for example, of New Zealand by Europeans, to, in contemporary times, being based in the western expansion in trade, tourism, economic development and conservation. This domination has expanded into the natural world, and reaches its ultimate conclusion in genetic engineering (Shiva, 1997). This colonisation becomes an ideology as it is taken as an uncritiqued reality. It remained unquestioned by my informants.

Indeed, Birch (1995) argues that this colonising ideology remains central to the social imaginary of western culture. It legitimates conquest and domination in that western civilisation itself has an emancipatory function in bringing “light and order to the wild darkness of savagery” (Birch, 1995, p. 140). Such emancipation connects with a social narrative of ‘making the world a better place’ that occurs through this enlightenment. According to Birch (1995) this wild ‘other’ sits as a necessary counter point to western civilisation. He also suggests that it has been primarily identified in a conflictive manner, rather than in a complementary or co-evolutionary way. The other, as wildness, becomes the enemy and involves an ongoing war or battle to control.

However, because according to Birch (1995), civilisation cannot exterminate wildness it gets confined to physically defined areas, in what he describes as the “incarceration of unassimilable wildness” (Birch, 1995, p. 143). My informants recognised wildness as being primarily in such wilderness areas. Further, within these wilderness reserves there is an attempt to control this wildness. In New Zealand this occurs through pest control and wildlife management (see following section). In the most intensive regimes, organisms are literally fenced-in or fenced-out and there is often controlled human access to these areas. Nature reserves are not tolerated as places where nature is allowed to get out of control. They are “not meant to be voids in the fabric of domination where anarchy is permitted, where nature is actually liberated” (Birch, 1995, p. 143).

This is an ideology based on the classical liberal notion of natural rights (Birch, 1995). It is exposed by informants who refer to ‘rights of species to exist’ and intrinsic value as a ‘right’. For example, the Kakapo has the ‘right’ as a species to continue to exist; therefore we have a responsibility to maintain that right, so the Kakapo is ‘managed’ to make sure its rights are protected. To enjoy the benefits of civilisation the Kakapo, in being maintained, and the South island Kokako, in being found, are absorbed. This granting of rights presupposes the “existence and the maintenance of a position of power to do the granting” (Birch, 1995, p.139). This involves reserving the right to allocate what is wild

and take it away, and allocating the benefits of civilisation to nature as a justification for attempts to order and control it. Here again the natural world becomes a subset of the social as it is co-opted and endangered species become commodities that are recreated in a fixed symbolic form.

6.4 Preservationism and predator control

There was another tension in my informants' positions. This involved the promotion of interaction between humans and the natural world, but being aware that they were also trying to reduce human interaction in order to keep nature 'pure'. Such a non-interactionist approach allows the development of such notions as intrinsic value. Its misunderstanding by my informants highlights this tension. Preservationism falls towards an emphasis on a pure nature, which in the New Zealand context is that of an indigenous New Zealand wilderness not affected by humans or the organisms they have introduced. However, because of the domination of the conceptualisation of nature as an object, nature becomes a nature by and for humans even in attempts to let it be otherwise. This is because management involves deciding how nature should be, in this case being made up of pre-European 'classic' indigenous ecosystems.

My informants wanted to put the wildlife they were managing back into their natural state rather than keep the animals in captivity. The goal was to develop self-sustaining populations. This required protecting them in the present so that they can survive without help in future. However, they felt they were not going to be able to resurrect pre-European ecosystems on the mainland. To do so would require a huge intrusion, comprising of a cycle of expanding control, through genetic engineering, or further introduction of 'foreign' species such as diseases. Rather, the focus was on slowing the damage being done. Central to this was that nature was broken and needed fixing, even though they realised that nature is characterised by change and in the long term new creatures will fill niches, or more correctly perhaps, similar niches. My informants realised that they were only 'making' small pockets of original biodiversity. Some suggested that these spaces risked becoming "natural zoos", places where people could visit and see nature. These sanctuaries require considerable management in the form of ongoing pest control. In this context, my informants understood pests and weeds as being the enemy. This is because they disturb the notion of a 'natural' nature. Pest management is "waging a

war” on behalf of the vulnerable. This position emphasised harmony in classical ecosystems and discordance in ‘infested’ ones.

Within this approach the central issue is the value of the restored environment, not wild nature as it stands before restoration. As such its value as other is suppressed in preference to human imposed values (Katz, 1995). The primary interactive value is lost with experiences of wildness in the present. In addition, if the restored environment is an adequate replacement for a previously existing natural environment, then humans can use, change or destroy natural entities without ethical concern.

Significantly, this recollection of the past involved in preservationism failed to project a utopian future, as my informants were generally pessimistic about the future and had no clear vision of where conservation in New Zealand was heading. Instead, their work was understood as ‘fire fighting’. This projection, I suggest, is not a recollection from place (local), but one dominated by the abstraction and universalisation of scientific understandings. It produces a tension between retaining indigenous biota for place based knowledge and cultural identity, on the one hand, and an universalisation of understandings (epistemologies) via globalisation (cultural, language, science), on the other. Preservationism can be seen as an attempt to retain indigenous/regional biota but not the experience, interaction and knowledge of place attendant with it.

6.5 Limits to the conceptual

The foregoing sections have revealed tensions and paradoxes in my informants’ attempts to conceptualise nature in an objective fashion. This in turn, it was suggested, was bound up with social narratives and ideologies. These tensions, contradictions and resulting confusions, have an explorational aspect. This is an exploration from ‘confusion’, that is a surplus of meaning and allows the investigation and projection of future possible worlds (see Section 2.2.4). There are, I suggest, four aspects that relate to their confusion and their difficulty in being clear about what they were doing. Two of these are implicit in the previous discussion, that is conceptual paradox and social pluralism. The second two involve individual perceptual experiences and our ontological immersion. It is in these latter two, I suggest, that lies the space for an alternative engagement that can in part be traced to the fact that this confusion does not dominate their day to day activities.

The confusion that devolves from a conceptual approach can be highlighted through one central tension. This is the conceptual tension between appeals to humans

being separate from nature and to an interrelatedness described in ecology. This is transmitted into preservationism, which carries the ecological interconnectedness but promotes a separation. My informant's work is carried out within this scientific narrative and its metaphysics that concentrates upon retaining biodiversity. This concern with biodiversity is a recent development in conservation that entails a change from more qualitative concerns, such as wilderness and habitat, to things that are more definable and quantifiable and that highlight material physical relations (Turner, 1996). It does not, however, reduce the problem of complexity. My informants recognised that ecology was complex. Consequently, for example, it is unclear to them whether conservation should be working to save endangered species or ecosystems. In addition, most of my informants recognised that biodiversity was continually changing so there was a problem in trying to maintain a fixed state. These problems are accentuated when ecological systems are considered as open systems, which highlights the difficulties of scale (see Section 3.3.3)(Norton, 1992). The coupling of this with an understanding that all interaction within open systems changes all outcomes, and of our inability to reveal our own immersion, both tacit and ontological, places constraints on the extent that nature can be managed. An ecological understanding, then, has another two opposing aspects. First, of being the means to implement endangered species management, and second, an aspect that highlights interconnectedness and complexity so counters the ability of being able to do so.

These difficulties did not come to the fore in everyday practices. Indeed, management practices were understood *consistently* within the endangered species management community. This community should not be considered as completely separated from the wider social sphere within which my informants also live. However, I suggest that the narrative of the conservation community dominates their practices. Here, concerns beyond a certain level are 'givens' and may remain unquestioned. Consequently, in their everyday interactions my informants are not pushed to conceptualise their understandings that my interviewing probed. Rather, they were left as accepted as they stood within the community's dominant narrative. This community involves belonging to a small group that has a set of common interests and experiences, and where there is mutual support and confirmation of doing the 'right' thing. In this sense 'rationality' becomes communally defined and influences the process of defining what nature is and what is important about it. This is revealed further in the protectiveness my informants show towards the places and species they work with. The emphasis on a communal

understanding is promoted by Department of Conservation policy. All employees must profess to have and support a 'conservation ethic' when they are employed. It should, however, be more properly called a preservation ethic.

This leads into the second aspect of their 'confusion'. This involves social pluralism. To some extent my informants could be considered to be living out conservation stories involving narratives with a mix of fixing, control, colonialism, and caring. In addition, their practices can and are understood in different ways at a broad social level. As has been discussed, such pluralism suggests my informants exist within an array of conflicting social narratives that are not necessarily reconcilable (Gare, 2000). These narratives include: scientific and economic progress (science based management and sponsorship/ commodification); globalisation; indigenoussness and national identity; biodiversity loss; preservationism and retaining wildness, and so on. I suggest this 'external' interpretational instability (i.e., at the social narrative level) with regards to endangered species management is connected with my informant's 'internal' confusion. As such their confusion is not just the effect of some internal cognitive disarray. Rather, as fundamentally public beings-in-the-world, their confusion expresses a public one. This reflects a pluralistic social imaginary that questions their communal understandings.

The third aspect is related to personal motivations. For many, doing conservation work was an individual conscious decision. This included personal fulfillment, individual achievement and a lifestyle that allowed them to live in such places. Their personal reasons were understood, in some cases, to stand separate from wider social narratives. This, I propose, has links with their *perceptual* experiences. The fourth aspect is related to our immersion in that we cannot conceptualise our own facticity.

To summarise, the foregoing suggests my informants' acts should not be understood as being purely conceptually based. The broad set of social narratives that relate to their work can be considered as a poetic (hermeneutic) of surplus of meaning in social understandings (tacit). However, within this there are dominant narratives, which have been outlined in the previous sections, which can be seen to emphasise conceptual facts and subjective values as a ways of knowing. This is in contrast to an interactive understanding. These narratives were also supported inside their community and in part lay unquestioned. The paradox for them is not that nature cannot be identified but that their identification entails conflicting interpretations involving social allocations.

6.6 Meaning in the act

As has been mentioned, in contrast to their conceptual confusions, my informants acted with consistency, energy and dedication. This involved following practices that are supported, and also required, by the conservation community and were generally not questioned (see Section 6.5). Also, and importantly for this investigation, *perceptions* among my informants were also consistent. These involved expressions of experiences of wildness, wonder, love and so on of the places in which they worked. They spoke of spiritual ideas, and they also appealed to feelings and passion and the importance of experiences. This suggests that their practices are connected to a perceptual being-in-the-world at an ontological level as well as the social. Because this being-in-the-world is expressed in part through their management practices it needs to be recognised that the practices are themselves ontologically significant (see section 4.2).

Considering this point further involves an additional de-emphasizing of the conceptual. The social world of conservation is a tradition of thought and action to which my informants contribute. This could be understood as a situation which pre-exists them as individuals and within which they reflexively make sense of their own acts. However, this assumes, following a modernist epistemology, that sense making is separate from actions. This suggests an ability to stand entirely separate from ones' own actions; a situation that was rejected in the theory sections. Consequently, I am proposing that sense does not follow action; rather, meaning is embedded in action (Schrag, 1986). As such, the conceptual 'ought' is buried in the act itself. The meaning is in the act of looking after Kakapo, so an understanding of the act as one of care comes from and also is based upon perception (Kohak, 1992). Values are thus derived from interaction at the personal, interactive level (experience) and from a social level (tradition as *ethos*) (i.e., The experiences the informants gain from interacting with the Kakapo and the tradition that links such acts to caring). However, these acts are understood as care within a tradition that, for example, concentrates on halting loss, protecting rights, emancipation and so on, and one in which objectification and inertness are central. As such, there is a tension between the dominant narrative of conservation, where nature is an object, and conservation being embodied in acts and perceptual experiences which are in part 'expressions' of our immersion in the world (ritual) and so where nature is not an object. In addition, although the Kakapo and South island Kokako are being 'saved' in spite of their

practical uselessness, in the present situation they lose that uselessness and become useful as icons and commodities.

The tension involved here is summed up by Kidner (1998, p. 75) when he suggests that; “The search for an environmental ethic based on the conscious intention to evaluate, order, control and even save may be misguided, since it assumes the experiential order which emerges from this drama, along with the social controls that maintain it”. My informants’ experiences of the natural world in their working lives revolve around such a management based experiential order. Interactions with the environment that were not in keeping with this order were discouraged. There are strict rules about where and when one can go and what interactions with the place can occur. Breaking these rules produced the risk of punishment by deportation. For example, engagements with Kakapo were required to have ‘positive conservation outcomes (i.e., to be consistent with the required management outcomes). As such one-on-one human interaction with Kakapo was discouraged. This was so that they retained more of their ‘wildness’. However, it is possible that it is in their reduction to objects that are manipulated that the real loss of their wildness occurs. It may be that one on one interaction (experience) with the Kakapo is more legitimate than doing it by ‘remote control’. My informants’ stories of care about Kakapo all arose from such close interaction, rather than from remote sensing work.

The foregoing suggests that the role of the contemplative and linguistic aspects of the ontological poetic (see Section 3.2.4) within the present tradition of praxis of endangered species management, is limited. So what becomes important, are the embodied experiences gained by my informants in interacting with the non-human world. Indeed, many of my informant’s experiences of the wonder of nature and understanding of wildness came from experiences not directly associated with their management work.

6.7 Wildness

In the practical situation of Kakapo management my informants associated wildness with a lack of human influence, or as involving a continuum of decreasing influence. Hand in hand with this association was the notion that natural things are supposed to be wild. This position, I suggest, was an allocation of an identity (or categorisation) to wildness to allow a normative engagement for their practical actions. In contrast, and developing further the perceptual link made in the previous section, my informants also expressed an understanding of wildness as also being a human attribute. It

being something that is just here and that we have no control over. This is an unreflexive being-in-the-world, as just, 'being there' (*dasein*). For some of my informants, wildness was not derived from the social but involved instinct, emotions, dreams, vision, desires, sex, and wild settings. Consequently, people could be seen as being wild in their beingness (immersion). Here, wildness can be recognised through reflexivity but it is not reflexivity itself (i.e., a *reflexive symbolism*). In short, my informants in part *perceived* the wild.

This highlights a link between wildness in 'nature' and wildness within us. This can be ultimately traced to the tacit and ontological (poetic), and not to the 'inside' of individuals' minds; not to the 'creative' autonomous human individual. This implies freedom is to be traced to our immersion and not to reflexivity. Autonomy does not involve a radical separation and complete independence. Indeed, in systems theory, the autonomy of systems is strengthened by interconnectedness, elaborate iteration and feedback, which can be considered influence. These processes create the possibility of change without which there is no freedom. So, although global economics and communication has caused an increasing interconnectedness and interdependence at the social level it is decreasing it at the local level between society and nature (Turner, 1997).

This understanding of wildness does not involve a conflict with civilisation, as something to be controlled or kept separate. Rather, it is an understanding of it being participatory, cooperative and complementary. We are participants because wildness is larger and more powerful than we can ever be; we are immersed in it. This involves a knowing participation in wildness not just a preserving of wilderness (Birch, 1995). In some sense wildness is a more difficult notion than wilderness and I think more useful in bringing into the open human relations to nature. This is because, in my informants' understanding, humans are not included in wilderness, which is understood to be where humans are not. However, humans *are* understood to be in part wild. This causes the problem of human's interaction with nature to become more subtle and complex and tilt away from the pure dichotomy of humans versus nature and indeed away from preservationist conservation ideals.

Attending to wildness may provide glimpses of the other's identity outside stock social definitions- beneath usual categories of use and value (Birch, 1995). Such a glimpse may involve a realisation that wildness can never be fully described or appropriated. At the core is not that there should be no symbolic or physical relation with wildness, but rather a concern over the form it takes. What counts as wildness is determined not by the absence

of people but by the relationship between people and place. A place is wild when its order is created by its own principles of organisation. Humans may influence it but not control it.

6.8 An interactive nature

These latter understandings of wildness sit against any final identification of nature. However, intrinsic value, as used in New Zealand conservation legislation, is an attempt to express an insight into nature as it is in itself. This is because it is a conceptualisation that suggests that objective value exists separate from the subject (Drenthen, 1999). This presents nature as being able to be interpreted in one way and rules out other possible understandings and allows its management under the pretext of protecting this intrinsic value. Significantly, intrinsic value as used in this way was rejected by my informants or used in a distorted manner. For nearly all of my informants it was understood as being a subjectively based allocated value. For some it was seen as an ambiguous term and so as a symbol that supports such social pluralism. Again, the implication here is that nature cannot be identified, not because of its 'otherness,' but rather because of pluralism in social valuing. However, their expressions of wildness above suggest, along with the importance of the perceptual, an implicit awareness of an animated nature.

However, such experiences of wildness, where unsupported by appropriate cultural forms tend not to be taken seriously (Kidner, 1998). Indeed, one of my informants suggested that some of their views were described as being Romantic and deemed unimportant. Another informant, when expressing what they described as more spiritual understandings, was concerned that their understandings were not spread around. They were anxious, I suggest, that such understandings might be considered irrational nonsense. I suggest that such notions tend to be seen as romantic or sentimental because value is conceived as a subjective overlay rather than a perceptual experience of our own and others' existence.

This lack of cultural resources, along with its linked metaphysics meant that my informants tended to use ecology as a *code* word for wholeness. Kidner (1998) argues that this is a projection of a broader intuitive understanding is put onto ecology because; First, ecology as a science is seen as legitimating it (social narrative) and, second, the cultural resources that express it in a fuller sense are lacking. My understanding is that our being-in-the-world involves more than a conceptually based ecological understanding, which is an ontic one that involves the interconnectedness of entities. Rather, it also embodies the

perceptually derived ontological ground of entities. In addition, my informants do not draw parallels with their understanding of an ecological ontic interconnectedness with other aspects of their understandings, for example, the origin of values.

To address this purely ontic identification, Drenthen (1999) suggests a *concept* of the sublime where “Sublime nature withdraws itself from us, it is inconceivable, and [in its inconceivability] it provokes wonder and a feeling of awe” (p.173). This links with Heidegger’s notion of *phusis* that retains the ‘other’ as unidentifiable and also denies the construction of a system of ethics that could justify our actions (see Section 3.4). Addressing nature in an open poetic manner reduces such a seizure. This can be interpreted where nature is ‘itself’ in its very contingency and inconceivability. This is a radical otherness, that in being unable to finally identify it leads to new respect and to an attitude of listening to nature (Kohak, 1992; Drenthen, 1999). The implication of this is that first hand interaction in the recognition of an interactive valuing increases this paradox of identity. However, as has been discussed (see Section 6.7), it can also be seen to invoke a normative development through the very acts that make up such an engagement.

Subsequently, an ethic of saving does not just involve physical practices of management. There is a need to ‘save’ nature’s open identity as other. This is to allow its withdrawal that is a preserving of the ‘earth’ (dwelling) (Foltz, 1995). The foundation for an ethic is a comportment not to entities themselves but to being and wildness which is then manifest in a comportment to entities (Foltz, 1995). Preston (2000) suggests that this involves a ‘epistemic attitude’ of respect for co-constructors (i.e., nature, objects) that involves an ethical ‘etiquette’ which comes from perceiving nature’s intrinsic worth. My informants’ experiential, perceptual wonder is central to this, and I suggest its basis lies in part outside conceptions and social and communal narratives. This ethic from judgment (perceptual style) is passed from experience into language as stories (i.e., via speech) (see Section 2.2.4). This position avoids becoming an ecologically deterministic approach because of the inability to know nature in itself. Any identification is mediated as there are multiple ways of living sustainably, but openness is required.

This sort of elusiveness is epitomised by the South island Kokako. It is mysterious; an analogy for a nature that self-conceals. It is truly wild in that it retains a reserve, both physically in its elusive traits, and hermeneutically as an analogy as a phenomenological symbol for wildness itself. The long search for the South island Kokako is characterised by fleeting glimpses, voice throwing that means the searchers never know exactly where it is

calling from, so it is there, but not there. Like pests, the South island Kokako has not been brought under control, and its identity remains in part defined as undefinable. The South island Kokako is what is really wild, in our stories whether it still exists physically or not.

Indeed, one informant said it should be left alone to 'pass on' in a dignified manner rather than captured and managed. Along with the death analogy used by other informants with regard to the loss of endangered species, this 'passing on' suggests the possibility that the extinction of species uncomfortably exposes our own mortality. For Heidegger it is our own mortality that is central to the angst that provokes care. It is an acceptance of mortality that provokes care, not its oppression. A non-acceptance of our own mortality by saving species at all costs, no matter what the effect on them as 'wild entities', including overt control and manipulation, undermines this notion of care.

6. 9 Experience, stories and place based knowledge

The concept of constituting the known world (and place) through active participation with nature and others implies that knowledge is embedded in both individual sensation and culture (Goldstein, 1999). This is what I have called perception. Perceptual experiences expressed through stories are knowledge about place. Stories of perceptual experiences also lie at the source of language, which is itself 'of' the 'world'. It is central to the world's emergence where things come to be (*logos*) (Foltz, 1995). This is not a structuralist understanding where the structure of language dominates, but where each story contributes to and changes the tradition while also being an expression of tradition. Through experience and telling stories, understandings are passed on along with an ability to change or adjust tradition.

This "Place based knowledge is constantly regenerated through active participation of individual (mind and body) with place and culture" (Goldstein, 1999, p. 162). This is because knowledge is always unique and is manifest in experiences of individual things in the world. For example, one of my informants observed that each Kakapo has its own unique response to human contact. This is an approach that stresses that we only ever gain a partial view of the world that as such is never a view from nowhere, but is always a view from somewhere in particular. Placed based knowledge highlights inter-relatedness, complexity and the creativity of natural processes. It implies that although abstract reasoning and general principles are sometimes useful in showing what

to look for in particular situations, there is no substitute for local knowledge of local conditions (Norton, 1992).

My informants in part recognised these perceptually based attributes of stories. Stories were seen as having an emotional aspect, and were important for expressing our inter-relatedness. Some informants thought stories were central to personal communication. This was especially the case with stories of personal experiences, which were linked to personal identity and expression. This links their story telling to a narrative identity. They are contributing to and changing these narratives through their experiences. There were also stories with a more poetic aspect. This included nature as mass and power, as almost overwhelming and engulfing, where nature is not considered an inert background. Also, some expressed a domination of nature over culture.

Stories were used to pass on to others the wonders of nature as experienced. Some thought this involved taking some responsibility for how stories are told. This can be linked to Fawcett's (2000) suggestion that metaphoric expressions enrich the communicative landscape of, for example, scientific understandings. This is based on Ricoeur's (1981 cited in Fawcett, 2000) argument for not thinking about the use metaphor as just a cognitive process. Instead the force of metaphors comes from the "complimentary functioning of feelings, thoughts and imagination" (p. 141). So, metaphorical discourse is linked to full experiencing. As such, scientists themselves have a responsibility for the metaphors they use. To this end one informant said that they tended to tell stories that were exciting and provoked the imagination. This lead to stories being used to invoke action from the listener. In this sense stories act as both a motivator and guide for action. So they have an ethical aspect, in that they carry the *ethos* of a tradition.

As has been suggested, in their internal use of stories my informants showed indications of an understanding of a broader role for them. In general, however, my informant's stories were not recognised as being 'of' the world but of being 'about' the world. They were understood as having a factual basis over which their personal emotional aspects (values) were overlaid. Language was understood as being descriptive rather than emergent. Many stories from their restoration experiences are invoked by the social side and its imperatives, rather than the wild or poetic side. Indeed, most of my informant's stories were about interactions with other people involved with the work. There were also stories about being in nature. Many of these involved an implicit

separation between the human and the natural. The latter was portrayed as being 'out there' and cut off from 'real' world of human society.

My informants were also concerned about stories not being spread outside the conservation community. Consequently they thought there was a need for more personal effort in spreading stories about their experiences. What became clear was that there were different types of stories. There were internal stories within the community, and external stories that are spread to the general public. The latter tend to get dominated by social concerns, such as political, economic, and universalised understandings. These stories are in turn vetted to highlight successes or failures, as there is a need to highlight both success and decay in conservation. The types of stories spread outside the conservation community involved nature being represented in a more objective fashion (see Sections 6.3).

The importance of place based knowledge, although not nonexistent, is downplayed by my informants. This is exposed in a general lack of emphasis on their own knowledge gained from personal experience. Rather, it is overridden by science based and broader social understandings. This, I suggest, is because of the strength and legitimacy of science, the associated social narrative of universalisation, and the demands of a science based Department of Conservation community. Second, my informants tended to overlay Maori understandings onto western frameworks. This could be interpreted as an oppression of alternative understandings of nature. This was most forceful when it came to a question about who controls and has access to the land.

For my informants the most effective way of spreading conservation issues is through getting people involved in conservation. My informants thought that conservation was also about changing people's understandings (advocacy). Some informants suggested that natural places should be available to everyone so that they can experience them. But such experiencing was bound up with preservationism, and my informants only in part encourage people to develop their own understanding via experience and stories in wild places. Their understandings become universalised and are part of a trend toward globalisation. As such the argument that indigenous flora and fauna is necessary for national identity (icons) seems weak against the economic and political discourse of globalisation. This is a case of attempting to have the best of both worlds, retaining a distinctive identity in a global culture while indigenous nature is used as a political and social marketing tool for tourism dollars in the global market place. In this sense it is used to actually embrace global culture.

Endangered species management, as it is characterised by my study, cannot be considered a ritual based dwelling, where ethics and truth emerge out of an ongoing open interaction between humans and nature; a practice that is not fundamentally ends orientated but invokes an adaptation of culture and people to nature. My informants as individuals intuit such notions, and such understandings sit quietly in many of their practices. However, our western tradition suppresses its expression through applying metaphysical, physical and cultural constraints.

Bioregionalism is a response to this disintegration of place based cultural and ecological relationships that dominated the lives of the pre-modern (Goldstein, 1999), where narratives grounded in interactions with the natural, bed social and human tradition to wider existence. However, we cannot go back physically or consciously to the pre-modern. We are now a *reflexive symbolic* culture and an awareness of this needs to be facilitated. Such a development, I suggest, requires a reflexive recognition of wildness.

6. 10 Conclusion

We are immersed in our own reflexive awareness of our immersion (reflexive symbolism)

Kidner (1998) suggests that much environmental theory attempts to comprehend environmental degradation through a metaphysic that itself arises out of our separation from the earth. This is the 'earth', in both Heidegger's sense and in a physical sense. However, the loss of relation with nature is not just due to the separation developed out of reflexive aspects of consciousness but rather occurs through forgetting the other immersive aspects of existence. As has been suggested, the challenge is much subtler than just a conceptual approach, but one that involves the interconnection of experience, language, and thinking, to the extent that it is the struggle to find a new story to inhabit.

This is not an approach allied to Teilhard DeChardin's (1955) position where reflexivity is an evolutionary peak that brings an ultimate interconnection (noosphere). Neither does it align directly with deep ecological approaches where a reflexive self expands to encompass the other, and so where everything becomes an extension of self. Rather, the other needs to be both separate for autonomy and autonomous for respect. The separation reflexivity allows is important as it permits us to do practical things, and enables

the development of 'other' that is required for an ethical relation. Reflexivity and its production of paradox and 'confusion' is part of the development of social pluralism as a social poetic (see section 2.2.4), and so is important as it allows the projection of alternative worlds. Consequently, my position does not deny the importance of a reflexively based individuality, or the use of science within attempts to achieve a broader understanding of our existence. This follows a hermeneutic interpretation of understanding involving intuition from interaction in place (wholes) and the development of scientific explanations (parts).

However, with an excessive emphasis on a reflexive understanding, nature does not remain other, but becomes engulfed in a calculative metaphysic that understands nature as set of objects to be arranged and organised. This in turn permits its management. Excessive management produces a nature that becomes in large part a created environment, "derived from socially organised knowledge-claims rather than from influences exogenous to human activity" (Giddens cited in Turner, 1996, p. 109). This involves the loss of its own self-ordering structure where nature becomes a subset of society. The feedback from systems beyond the social, from which all human activity initially derives, is suppressed. This occurs not only through a lack of interaction, but concerns the *type* of interaction. Nature becomes 'neutralised', a medium, or background against which human life is played, rather than one in which we inhabit and have a vital relationship.

Consequently, I suggest, there is a need to reflexively recognise our immersion and the significance of wildness and autonomy. Reality is not for or by us, it is not something 'out there' that we can make fully rationally clear. As such this is not a representational approach where there is a separate reality of which we make descriptions, or just a creation of the play of language. Rather, it is an unmastered 'world' in which we are immersed and that comes into meaningful being through individual experience interacting with a tradition of meaning (language and culture) and epitomised by the notion of wildness. Hence the importance of the wild non-humanly created world. Stories as 'speech' that derive from experience contribute to, and are manifest through, both the social imaginary and *logos*. Because of our immersion in the world its ultimate ground always remains hidden. So the other always remains both active and essentially unknowable and in this demands respect. Here the other never becomes something to be manipulated to human ends. This hiddenness allows space and pluralism in order to develop new understandings and critique ideologies and can become facilitated in a tradition as ritualised activities. This openness to the poetic

via experience of nature is a narrative that inherently fosters an ethical framework and lies implicit in my informant’s understandings.

In this understanding, ‘Truth’ is not to be derived only from pluralist discussion, or described as an objectified pure presence, but emerges from experience in the world. Truth about the natural world only comes from ongoing interaction with it. This involves the recognition of an interactive source of valuing and of the ongoing self-emergence of the world in wildness. Because wildness is always more than we can describe, categorise, or systemise, managing it is contradictory. What is most vital is that we should be careful not to oppress it. For in its very autonomy, expressed as a poetic openness, lies space for a cultural adaptation. Speech that expresses such an interactive reciprocity and allows it to continue is, in an important sense, true. It is in this sense, I suggest, that wilderness preservations are most important (see Figure 6.2). Indeed, they should probably be renamed *wild places*.

Figure 6.2
Three aspects of wilderness (wild places)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Sources of the poetic</i> | Cultural - as a ground of existence and creativity. |
| 2. <i>Subversive potential</i> | Political - as a counterpoint to the fabric of domination of contemporary culture. |
| 3. <i>Biodiversity</i> | Physical - protection of physical diversity of life. |

In linking the foregoing position to the results, I suggest a characterisation of my informants as a small group of people who could be generally considered as possessing a 'postmodern' practical sensibility. For most there are no great guides (God, etc.), save the social milieu into which they are thrown. It is within this milieu that they feel the need to do something useful with their lives. Their understanding of care has strong pragmatic threads, indeed, they have to act, for as Kylie suggested “to try and intellectually resolve

things risks being frozen into inaction.” My informants exist in an ethos (a social imaginary) dominated by praxis. Here the meaning of care in part lies in the very act of caring itself. Implicit in this are social narratives of emancipation that highlight saving through fixing.

Associated to this is the loss of other species such as the Huia. This loss is recollected and projects a future without these animals as a depauperate world. These losses involve a loss of cultural (place) identity; a loss of biodiversity; a loss for future generations; in short a loss for humans. Stopping such loss is understood as care within the present tradition. Significantly, the retention of an indigenous New Zealand wilderness not affected by humans, which is a utopian ideal projected from the past, was not seen as being realistic or achievable. This, I suggest, is because such a preservationist approach is an attempt to recollect a ‘natural’ past without a recollection of a more interactive human past that associated with it. My informants were aware of the paradoxes in such an approach. In addition, at the present time halting the loss of biodiversity is the scientific imperative at the basis of conservation. My investigations suggest that although social concerns complicate and distort this, for my informants the biodiversity imperative is still forceful.

The understanding central to this pragmatic tradition of care is the way the ‘world’ is conceived as a set of objects. My informants’ understandings were ordered by conceptions of nature as an object that is explained by science, or nature as a background on which subjective values were placed. Consequently, an understanding of nature as involving an ongoing emergence becomes shifted to a social pluralism. This, I suggest, allows the acceptance of sponsorship, for example, that overtly represents nature as a social production, that is in part defined by media and science. In highlighting endangered species as icons, my informants are consciously aware that this is a social symbolic construction of Kakapo but see nothing wrong with this as it allows conservation aims to be met.

I suggest that my informants’ understandings are dominated by both the imperatives of the institution they work for, which itself is scientifically based, and broader social narratives about what the natural world ‘is’. The lack of interaction involved in the development of these social narratives is due to the ‘public’, being mostly urban, and so having little and arguably a socially contrived interaction with the natural world. This questions where the guide to public policy in this matter might lie, with the possibility of a vacuum developing that is filled by mythologies and ideologies developed within this relational breakdown (Kidner, 1998). My investigations point to people involved in

conservation work being both unaware and compliant to some urban mythologies.

Endangered species workers interact, but this is oppressed by social narratives that do not derive from first hand experience. The normative engagement derived from these urban mythologies involves defining clear lines about the relationship between humans and nature, wild and non-wild.

This fixing of identity, as a product of social values, ironically sits within a tradition of social pluralism. Consequently, this may be a contested engagement, although only within certain limits, because throughout this contesting, nature is presented as inert, and the necessity and importance of first hand experience is downplayed. The notion of intrinsic value supports such a human/nature dichotomy and it sits as the complementary pole to a nature that has its value allocated by humans, as it also denies the requirement for interaction.

This dichotomy is highlighted by my informants who considered human interaction as involving some form of oppression of wildness. Consequently, using remote technology in management was seen to enable wildness to be retained. The implication is that they did not consider the possibility that restoration was an interaction that may foster wildness. This is questioned by my position, where a first hand human interaction with the animals would be considered more likely to foster both wildness and care.

This more interactive approach involves a broader notion of care that emerges out of individual interaction hand in hand with a complementary tradition that fosters such an interactive understanding. As has been outlined, it includes the development of a reflexive selfhood but also facilitates a respect for the other. Becoming reflexively aware of this approach enables the development of spreading the current tradition of care, as expressed by my informants, into this broader care, or dwelling. This second type of care is one that ultimately guides ethical decision making with regards to practices. It tends towards a less pragmatic approach towards a more ritualised one. Importantly, it is also emergent from the current practices and understanding of care. My informants, I suggest, show hints of this second understanding of care. These traces appear in my informant's concerns with the importance of experience and stories in conservation. Also it arises in their recognition of wildness, their use of intuition, passion and feelings as ways of understanding, and the importance of wild places in their lives.

Indeed, some of my informants recognised that the present procedures involved in endangered species management meant that other less tangible things (e.g., wildness) may

be lost. A care that is concerned with such ‘intangible’ losses is not separate from present pragmatic based care, because it is through such practices that people interact with wild places in a non- exploitative manner. As such, an understanding of care within the present tradition is vital to developing a broader understanding of care.

My informants, though aware of a ‘fuller nature’, are constrained by present cultural understandings from expressing it. And, because “We lack the proper frameworks for articulating the problems ...[we] tend to fall back on simplistic oppositions” (Tims, 2001, p. 22). In particular, a central opposition is a human-nature dichotomy. As a group they are implicitly aware of the paradox in their oppositional understandings, but did not know how to express it in a culturally legitimate fashion. In other words, a legitimate alternative approach towards attempting to resolve these paradoxes was not available. As has already been discussed, this is not a conceptual resolution because we cannot fully conceptualise those acts that expose our immersion. Rather, a way out of this is to reflexively force the confusion and paradoxes inherent in conservation to the surface. This is a reflexive recognition of what we can never be completely clear about. Reflexivity, in part, creates this instability; a point central in Heidegger’s thinking (see Section 3.2.1). This can in turn allow an awareness and understanding of wildness to emerge at the conceptual level that is already *perceived* by my informants. In this, the paradox of identity is retained as recognition of the contingency and unknown in wildness that gives respect. This is pluralism derived from experience of the natural, not just from a play in the social. There are traces of this in the present praxis based conservation tradition that along with perceptual experiences and reflexivity above can develop into ritual based dwelling (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3

Three supports of dwelling:

- 1. *Perceptual experience* (an experiential basis in wildness)
 - 2. *A heightened reflexivity* (conceptual paradox/confusion and social pluralism)
 - 3. *A tradition of care* (as a guiding framework and resources for expression of dwelling)
-

The following ideas are suggestions that may foster the awareness that already lies in my informants:

1. Disseminate experiential stories of people interacting closely with wild places.
2. Incorporate alternative epistemologies to encourage a place based knowledge (e.g., Maori).
3. Attempt to develop frameworks in Pakeha culture for the legitimate expression of the non-rational with regards to the natural world.
4. Develop systems based ecological understanding in education towards its fuller conclusion (i.e., to a *reflexive symbolism*).
5. Increased emphasis on local, experiential based conservation than the current preservationist approach entails.
6. Greater acceptance and celebration by the New Zealand conservation community of the wild ecosystems that now exist in New Zealand in all their 'imperfections'.

Without doubt much of the current physical diversity and richness of the planet is at risk of being lost and ecological science is the best approach we presently have of understanding the interacting physical world. We do have to do some management; it is part and parcel of interaction. This should, however, be influence rather than control and should also involve looking to and respecting guides other than science. This involves an acceptance of the limits of the conceptual that embodies a certain humbleness. We need, for example, to wait for the South Island kokako. It will, as it were, reveal itself when it is ready; it should not be forced to show itself. Its extinction would be a physical loss, and possibly may have already occurred. But it still exists as a mythological creature. As such, South island Kokako epitomises the wild, it is unassimilable as 'other', and in its withdrawness it demands respect as something uncontrolled. A broader caring for the South island Kokako involves letting it retain its reticence, as an analogy for a relation with

nature as wild more generally. I suggest there should be an attempt to not let the South island Kokako fall into the same restoration regime as the Kakapo, one that requires it to be subjected to the control of technology and provoked into revealing itself. Rather its management would involve a more personal restrained relation to generate stories that highlight its autonomy. I believe that it is through this type of relation with the natural world that the possibility for cultural adaptation towards a more ecologically sustainable future lies. One that will encourage the break down of a controlling and expansionist management movement in Western culture, and the human-nature dichotomy implicit in it. This involves living in a ritualised or more restrained way in place that is fostered through interaction and experience.

This research has been an attempt on my part to conceptualise endangered species management in New Zealand. It may have become clear to the reader that the categories I have developed are to some extent inadequate. No doubt someone with a different biography would approach this in a different fashion. My understandings support both of these points and also that these sorts of problems cannot be resolved in an abstract or theoretical sense, as this itself is to ignore the non-rational realm. Rather, the limits are drawn in ongoing interaction and attendance to both the wild and the rational. Where nature is not just a sick patient or broken machine, rather a wildness, or a collection of Gods, or a source of the sublime, or a wellspring of moral instruction, or indeed kin. Through all this, an approach for living sustainably has evolved. That is, to dwell in the very strange and wonderful unknown closeness and wildness of the world, and in this reticence, respect its mystery and anarchy.

Appendix 1

Interview Questions

The following is a list of the questions for the in-depth interviews:

- Why are you involved in the management/saving of endangered birds?
- Could you tell me about some of the more memorable experiences you have had in this work?
- Do you think the stories produced about endangered species (finding them, looking after them etc.) are important? Why?
- Why is saving endangered species important?
- What do you see as being the long-term goals of conservation in New Zealand?
- How do you see the saving of endangered species contributes to the goals of conservation in New Zealand? At an ecological level? At social level?
- What do you understand as being the ecological imperatives involved?
- What do you think is the best way to inform the public about conservation issues?
- What do you think about commercialisation (sponsorship) of endangered bird management?
- Why do you think this commercialisation is happening?
- How do you think wildlife management contributes to developing an environmental ethic in New Zealand?
- What do you think of the New Zealand public's current conservation ethic?
- What do you think nature is? How would you define it?
- In the context of endangered species do you think ecosystems, species or individuals are most important? Why?
- What do you understand by the term 'intrinsic value'?
- What do think about intrinsic value as a basis for conservation?
- What elements of the natural world do you think have/not have intrinsic value?
- What do you think wildness is? Why do think this? What isn't wild? Do you think wildness is important?
- What do you think biodiversity is? What does it mean to you?
- To what extent do you think science should guide humans in their interaction with nature?

- If the Kakapo population is brought up to a self-sustaining level, what do you think will happen to it in the long term? Why?
- If the South Island kokako is 'found' what do you think should happen? Why?
- Do you ever have any concerns over the treatment of the individual birds?
- Do you think a purely scientifically informed management is best, or that a co management approach, with Maori for example, is a valid approach? Why?
- Do you think that more active Maori involvement will change the way conservation in New Zealand is done? Why?
- Do you think that more active Maori involvement will improve conservation in New Zealand? Why?
- What do you think the outcomes for conservation will be with Maori involvement?
- What do you think about cultural harvest?

Glossary

Conceptual	Reflexive sense making or categorising.
Dwelling	A way of living or disposition that grants things leeway to disclose themselves and which involves concern or care.
Ethics	The consideration of the good of acts towards 'others' that is guided by tradition.
Experience	Individual, raw, embodied, sensuous events.
Facticity	(Being-in-the-world) Made up of perceptual, tacit and conceptual.
Immersion	The perceptual and tacit aspects of our existence.
Ontological	This is the ongoing emergence of Being through language and experience that discloses a 'world'.

Perceptual	Experience, tacit and ontological (not conceptual)
Poetic	<p>1. (tacit) The surplus of meaning within a tradition (social pluralism)</p> <p>2. (ontological) The ongoing disclosure through language, embodiment and meditation of the meaningfulness of the world.</p>
Practices	Cultural and individual expressions of Being-in-the-world.
Pre-ontological	What is presupposed by ontological disclosure. The existence of things (Being) that is so close we cannot be clear about it.
Reflexive symbolism	A cultural regime of signification in which we become reflexively aware of our immersion.
Ritual	Cultural practices that embody dwelling.
Social imaginary	The mediating symbolic configurations (e.g., mythologies and ideologies) both making up and carried by tradition. They lie unrecognised in everyday practices.
Tacit	The social imaginary and tacit poetic.
Tradition	The cultural configuration in which practices are carried.
Wildness	An analogy for the ongoing disclosure and contingency of Being.
World	The meaningful matrix in which we exist.

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